

2 Peter: A Commentary

The Good – the Bad – The Beautiful

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Preface

Through biblical study materials (commentaries, study guides, etc.), efforts are commonly employed to reference historical people, places, and things which lend weight to a proper understanding of biblical texts. In some ways, this is unavoidable and even desirable.

In working through 2 Peter, however, I have chosen to avoid historical references to one of the early problems which the early church encountered: gnosticism. In fact, many facets of evil, false teachings in gnosticism continue to this day – without using the name or being consciously associated with it.

In fact, as will be seen in the details of false teachings and false teachers, especially in chapter 2, such details are easily seen, and in some ways are being *taught* today in contemporary newspapers, TV programs and commercials, social media platforms, and mainline societal practices:

(1) deception; (2) denial of God; (3) sensual desires; (4) speaking against God; (5) corrupt desires and motives; (6) fake words; (7) despises authorities; (8) daring shamelessness; (9) self-willed arrogance; (10) free use of language; (11) illogical; (12) unspiritual; (13) ignorance; (14) pride; (15) sensual indulgences in broad daylight; (16) filthiness; (17) adulterous; (18) seductive; (19) empty promises; (20) disturbers; (21) boastful, worthless words of vanity; (22) defiled and defilements; (23) traitors; (24) poisonous; (25) prefers darkness.

So, it is the position within this commentary that it addresses hangovers from historical gnosticism and simply continues without that name. I, therefore, avoid the term so as to avoid looking pedantic or displaying knowledge in an unnecessary or even tiresome way.

If I am correct in this position or perspective, do not be surprised if, while reading this commentary, it sounds like a modern day story with easily known words and recognizable people.

The Bible is the Word of God. And that Word is made up of words (nouns, verbs, pronouns, etc.). So, do not be offended or turned off by the frequent and necessary times in which the significance of words, verb tenses, and other grammatical matters are pointed out. Such maneuvers shed significant light on the meaning of God's Word which would not otherwise be seen.

Introduction

It does not take long before time reveals that life is a continual series of options or choices. These options or choices are typically seen in various fields of conflicting interests, such as: *ignorance or knowledge; error & wickedness or truth & righteousness; forgetfulness or remembrance; stability or instability; irregular and divisive or regular and unifying; compatible or incompatible; slaves to corruption and condemnation or subjects of upright character and celebration; speculative theories or scriptural truths; the new and foreign or the old and familiar.*

Any and every age in human history, of course, is characterized by these opposing or conflicting options. How and what we choose reveals something about our own makeup or state of being. This is not to say that the changing of choices cannot, does not, or has not occurred. So, it is interesting to evaluate the times and determining factors in the making of choices.

The fact that skepticism (the questioning or doubting of theoretical truths and apparent facts) enters into the framework of choices is not really new or surprising in any generation. After all, skepticism is simply part and parcel of the human enterprise.

Historically, for example, people have frequently questioned such things as the origin of life; the road to ultimate happiness and fulfillment; justice; and even the rule of God in human history. Some have questioned whether or not there is an afterlife and what it will be like. Others have raised doubts about whether ethics or morality is absolute or relative.

In the face of such deliberations, should one run and hide and let others deal with the difficulties involved, or, should one stand up, speak out, and offer suggestions as to how best to wrestle with the warring options? Both options, of course, have always confronted us and always will.

One such example of one who chose to stand up, speak out, and offer suggestions as to how best to confront the dilemmas of life lived in the first century. His method and means of dealing with difficulties, such as those noted in italics in the opening paragraph, are actually as fresh, urgent, and vital for this 21st century as for his own. His platform was that of: **1.** *knowledge* (1:2-3, 5-6, 8, 12, 14; 2:20; 3:17) vs. *ignorance* (3:8, 16); **2.** *truth and righteousness* (1:1,12; 2:2,5, 21; 3:13) vs. *error and wickedness* (2:6, 8,12, 5,17-19, 22; 3:17); **3.** *remembrance* (1:12-15; 3:1-2) vs. *forgetfulness* (1:9; 2:20-22) ; **4.** *stability* (1:10, 12; 3:17) vs. *instability* (2:2,15, 20-22; 3:16); **5.** *subjects of upright character and celebration* (1:3-4, 10-11; 3:11- 18) vs. *slaves to corruption and condemnation* (1:20; 2:3,4-10a; 19-20;

3:4-6) ; **6.** *scriptural truths/the old & familiar* (1:12-15; 3:1-2) vs. *speculative theories/the new & foreign* (2:17-19; 3:3-4) – just to highlight several features of Peter’s orientation.

What may we learn from this man’s choices? Are the particular problems he addressed then still the same type problems as those people face today? What was the source of his proffered solutions? Is that source as reliable for us as it was for him and them?

Words, of course, are one of the primary ways by which we communicate. To properly understand a person’s position on matters, it is extremely important, therefore, to be familiar with a person’s words and the meaning of them. Before looking at the particular methods and means of dealing with the difficulties in his day, the following section isolates several of those words (*Greek words transliterated into English and then the translated meaning*) and the repetitive use of such in his own efforts to confront conflicting choices or options. It will be interesting to see if the readers find appropriate ways to adopt and/or adapt what he said in the 1st century to what we face in the 21st century.

Recurring Words

1:2: epignosei (“knowledge”)

1:3: epignoseos (“knowledge”)

1:8: epignosin (“knowledge”)

2:20: epignosei (“knowledge”)

1:3: dedoremenes (“given, bestowed upon, granted”)

1:4: dedoretai (“given, bestowed upon, granted”)

1:5: gnosin (“knowledge”)

1:6: gnosei (“knowledge”)

3:17: proginoskontes (“knowing beforehand”)

1:6: eusebeian (“godliness”)

1:7: eusebeia (“godliness”)

1:7: philadelphian (“brotherly love/kindness”)

1:7: philadelphia (“brotherly love/kindness”)

1:12: eidotas (“know”)

1:14: eidos (“knowing”)

1:12: hupomimneskein (“remind”)

1:13: hupomnesei (“reminder”)

1:15: mnemen (“remember”)

1:17: phones (“utterance”)

1:18: phonen (“utterance”)

1:19: prophetikon (“prophetic”)

1:20: propheteia (“prophecy”)

1:21: propheteia (“prophecy”)

2:1: pseudoprophetai (“false prophets”)

2:1: pseudodidaskaloi (“false teachers”)

2:3: plastois logois (“false words”) [cp. 2:1]

2:1: apoleias (“destructive”)

2:1: apoleian (“destruction”) 2:3: apoleia (“destruction”)

3:6: apoletō (“destroyed”)

3:9: apolesthai (“to perish”)

3:16: apoleian (“destruction”)

2:7: dikaion [1:13] (“righteous, right”)

2:8: dikaios (“righteous”)

2:8: dikaian (“righteous”)

2:13: adikoumenoi (“suffering unrighteousness, wrong”)

2:13: adikias (“unrighteousness”)

2:15: adikias (“unrighteousness”)

3:6: apoletō (“destroyed”)

3:9: apolesthai (“to destroy”)

3:16: apoleian (“destruction”)

Of the 402 vocabulary words in 2 Pt., 58 of them occur only in 2 Pt. That is the highest proportion (14.4%) in the NT.

Jude has 460 vocabulary words and 111 of them are in 2 Pt. [John Elliott in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. V, 284.]

Purpose

In addition to noting key words and their usage and meaning, it is also important to know the purpose or reason why such words are used. That is, what is their aim? What problem is being addressed? What resolution or solution is being offered?

The three central concepts throughout this writing are: THE GOOD (Ch. 1) – THE BAD (Ch. 2) – THE BEAUTIFUL (Ch. 3)

As indicated in the Preface, the purpose of this structured study of 2 Peter is to gain insights into its relevancy for today. This may be one of the most relevant writings for today in the NT. The problems it addresses then are the same problems our society and world are facing today. The solutions it offers then are the same solutions we need now. So, explore the good, the bad, and the beautiful in this writing and see for yourself if you do not end up saying: “I never knew an ancient document like 2 Peter could be filled with so much truth, so much hope, and so much positive energy and direction for our contemporary world.”

Scriptural Structure

I PRELIMINARIES (1:1-2)

- A. Double Names (1:1a)
- B. Dignity (1:1b)
- C. Designation (1:1c)
- D. Deep Knowledge (1:2)

II PROVISIONS OF DEITY (1:3-21)

- A. Divine Power and Nature: life & godliness (1:3-4)
- B. Developmental Perspective: admonition & addition (1:5-9)
- C. Diligent Pursuit: practice & provision (1:10-11)
- D. Desired Perseverance: reminders & reflections (1:12-15)
- E. Display of Power: visualization & verification (1:16-18)
- F. Declaration of Prophets: information and inspiration (1:19-21)

III PROPHETS OF DESTRUCTION (2:1-22)

- A. Description (2:1-3)
- B. Demonstration (2:4-6)
- C. Deliverance (2:7-8)
- D. Deductions (2:9)
- E. Details (2:10-22)

IV PROMISE OF DAY OF THE LORD (3:1-18)

- A. Discernment (3:1-2)
- B. Denial (3:3-4)
- C. Destruction (3:5-7)
- D. Delay (3:8-10)
- E. Diverse Exhortations (3:11-18a)
- F. Doxology (3:18b)

Commentary

THE GOOD

I PRELIMINARIES (1:1-2)

A. Double Names (1:1a)

Sumeon Petros (“Simeon Peter”)

Sumeon is the Hebrew/Aramaic form of the name of the Apostle, otherwise known as *Petros* (“Peter; rock, stone” – a Greek nickname Jesus gave him in John 1:42). This Hebrew/Aramaic form of his name is found six other times in the NT: (1) a man in Jerusalem [Luke 2:25, 34]; (2) a person in the genealogy of Jesus [Luke 3:30]; (3) a Christian in Antioch, surnamed Niger [Acts 13:1]; (4) the apostle Peter [Acts 15:14]; and (5) son of Jacob [Rev. 7:7].

The author’s use of both names may indicate: (1) his desire to connect with both Jewish and Gentile readers; (2) to highlight the transition of his old name, as a fisher of fish, to his new name as a fisher of men. The use of double names was done quite often in the ancient Near East. Douglas Moo notes that “many people used both the name they were given in their native language and a Greek name, since Greek was so widely spoken” (33).

B. Dignity (1:1b)

doulos kai apostolos 'Iesou Christou (“a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ”)

By worldly standards, these two identification marks would not be regarded as very dignified expressions. After all, the word *doulos* was commonly used in a negative way “to describe the status of a slave or an attitude corresponding to that of a slave” (Rengstor, 261). But, as used here and elsewhere in the NT, the word properly denotes a positive spirit of humility and honor. After all, Peter is so designating himself in his relationship to Jesus Christ and his sense of subservience to Him as his Master. Gone is the self-generated, perhaps

even arrogant attitude he displayed in the earlier days of his flesh. As such, he is conveying his commitment and obedience to Him. Indeed, the author “uses first an expression which puts him on a level with those to whom he is speaking before he claims a hearing by right of his apostleship” (Bigg, 249).

The word *apostolos* further strengthens the dignity of which he speaks. The word itself is composed of two other words: *apo* (“from”) and *stello* (“I send”), thus, one who is sent from another; in this case, *’Iesou Christou* (“Jesus Christ”). So, the authority with which he speaks/writes is the authority of one who was sent from none other than Jesus Christ. No self-generated opinions or impressions will be forthcoming. Rather, he was “entrusted with a message” (Gutzke, 107) to deliver from Someone Who was far superior to himself. Indeed, the term here “is a comprehensive term for ‘bearers of the NT message’” (Rengstor, 422). He here acknowledges that he is simply one of them.

C. Designation (1:1c)

tois isotimon hemin lachousin pistin en dikaiosune tou theou hemon kai soteris ’Iesou Christou (“to those having received with us an equally valuable, honorable kind of faith-oriented righteousness from our God and Savior, Jesus Christ”)

The unnamed recipients of this writing are here designated with an expression which perfectly fits all Christians anywhere at anytime. The fact that his readers received the same benefit/s “with us,” may indicate that Peter, the Jewish fisherman, was addressing Gentile Christians who now share equally as recipients of the righteousness which God grants to all who have faith in Jesus (cp. Rom. 1:17; 3:4, 21-30; 4:1-22; 5:1-21; 6:13-20; Gal. 2:16; 3:6-8; Tit. 3:7). By the way, the word for “righteousness” is *dikaosune*; and the word for “justified” in the NT is *dikaioo* which means “to be declared righteous”). Indeed, both *faith* and *righteousness* are gifts from God.

The word *isotimon* (“equally valuable, honorable”) occurs only here in the NT and which the KJV translates as “precious.” However, as Alexander Maclaren points out, “Peter seems to have had

a liking for that word” and refers to the various uses and forms of that word in both 1 and 2 Peter in his “list of valuables” (170):

[note the *tim* in all the words which ties together their meaning]:

polutimoterōn (“more precious than gold” – 1 Pt. 1:7)

timio (“precious blood of Christ” – 1 Pt. 1:19)

entimon (“precious in the sight of God” – 1 Pt. 2:4)

entimon (“precious cornerstone” – 1 Pt. 2:6)

time (“precious value” – 1 Pt. 2:7)

timao (“honor all” – 1 Pt. 2:17)

time (“honor to wife” – 1 Pt. 3:7)

isotimon (“precious faith” – 2 Pt. 1:1)

timia (“precious promises” – 2 Pt. 1:4)

Although false prophets/teachers [2:1] in the 1st century then, as well as false teachers in the 21st century now, deny the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth, Ray Summers suggests that the words *our God and Savior, Jesus Christ* “may be an initial affirmation of the deity of Jesus Christ” (175). This is the only place in the NT where “the righteousness of *Jesus Christ*” is mentioned; elsewhere it is in reference to *God*. So, it is only sensible that it is here associated with Jesus *Who is God*. The word “righteousness” occurs again in 2:5, 21; 3:13.

D. Deep Knowledge (1:2)

charis humin kai eirene plethuntheie en epignosei tou theou kai Iesou tou kuriou hemon (“may grace and peace be increased for you in deeper, fuller knowledge of God, even of Jesus our Lord”)

This strong, desirable wish by Peter for his readers to gain advanced, experiential knowledge (*epignosis*) of God and Jesus went beyond the knowledge (*gnosis*) set forth by the false teachers. The false teachers speculated that knowledge (*gnosis*) was given to people by God through mystical visions of an ecstatic (thrilling, joyful, rapturous, trance-like) nature. This secretive-like knowledge can only be received by a few, special people who believe. Although supposedly from God, it is held that all knowledge contained in the visions or divine revelations is imparted by tradition [*paradosis* = teachings handed down from one group or generation to another]. Then the

imparted knowledge leads to regeneration of the believer and “guarantees the ascent of his soul after death” (Bultmann, 694-695).

Peter maintains that it is no secret whatsoever as to what the God Who became man in Jesus desires to give. This deeper, fuller knowledge which He gives is anchored in “grace [the unmerited, undeserved favor of God to people] and peace” [the resulting components of acceptance by God into His family and the absence of inward hostility toward God]. But although these theological twins are solidly anchored, they are also capable of further growth and development in the practical pathways before each child of God. In other words, “there may be a false *gnosis*, but never a false *epignosis*. The latter is a true, clear, full knowledge that is personally embraced and has the strongest effect on the personal religious life” (Lenski, 253). Indeed, the word *epignosis* depicts

an intensive, greater strength . . . a deeper and more intimate knowledge and acquaintance. . . . It is bringing me better acquainted with a thing I knew before; a more exact viewing of an object that I saw before afar off. That little portion of knowledge which we had here shall be improved, our eye shall be raised to see the same things more strongly and clearly (Trench, 285).

What a marvelous wish: a wishful prayer “for a multiplication of grace and peace in the realm of the full knowledge which has its foundation in God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Summers, 175). The word “grace” is mentioned in 1 Peter only here and 3:18 and the word “peace” only here and 3:14.

Furthermore, in keeping with my translation of the word *kai* as “even,” rather than “and,” it is important to note that the word may also be translated, “that is, namely” and mean that “God” is namely “Jesus our Lord.” In fact, the NIV translates it, “our God and Savior Jesus Christ,” clearing declaring that both titles apply to Jesus. Douglas Moo supports this perspective:

. . . here we have one of the few verses in the New Testa-

ment where Jesus is explicitly called ‘God.’ This does not, of course, mean that for Peter Jesus Christ has taken the place of the Old Testament God he has worshiped since childhood. It means, rather, that he has now come to understand that Jesus, along with the Father, is God. (35)

In the following section, Peter spells out more specifically what this deeper, fuller knowledge entails. There is, therefore, no need to advance human speculations as to its meaning but rather to appropriate divine revelations (that is, the provisions of deity within this *epignosis*). The details will now be examined.

II PROVISIONS OF DEITY (1:3-21)

A. Divine Power and Nature: life and godliness (1:3-4)

Hos panta hemin tes theias dunameos autou ta pros zoen kai eusebeian dedoremenes dia tes epignoseos tou kalesantos hemas idia doxe kai arete (“Because all things pertaining to life and godliness have been given to us by His divine power through the deeper, fuller knowledge of the One Who called us by His own glory and goodness”)

The word *Hos* explains the reason why Peter wished for the multiplication of grace and peace and what that wish involved. His wish was not some vague, hopeful, secret wrapped in layers of mystery and difficulty. Rather it involved God’s provisions for all that was necessary for practical everyday living as a child of God. These provisions are here stated in be in reference to “life and godliness.” The word “life” refers to the regenerative life; the life which begins with the new birth or birth from above; the abundant life of which Jesus spoke in John 10:10. The Christian life of faith does not restrict life’s meaningfulness but rather expands it into maximum fulfillment and purposeful desires and directions. The Christian faith intensifies life because it embraces and encompasses a relationship with the Author of Life and fills that life with utter joyfulness. The word “godliness” (*eusebeian*) means *to worship well* and occurs elsewhere in the NT in vs. 6 and 7 of this chapter, 3:11 of this letter;

as well as Acts 3:12; 1 Tim. 2:2; 3:16; 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11; 2 Tim. 3:5; and Tit.1:1. The word denotes a manner of life which pleases and reflects God; a life which is controlled by sound, solid teachings; a life rooted in Christ; a life separated from ungodly ways which are at variance with God's will and ways; a life which is morally good and virtuous, as seen in vs. 5-7 (Foerster, 182-184). In other words, "the biblical authors use it to summarize the behavior expected of Christians who have come to know the God of Scripture" (Moo, 41). Trench captures the flow of the word this way:

. . . leaving nothing willingly undone which pertained to the circle of prescribed duties . . . with the consciousness of the danger of slipping into a careless negligent performance of God's service, and of the need therefore of anxiously watching against the adding to or diminishing from, or in any other way altering, that which has been by Him commanded (Trench, 174).

These provisions "have been given" (*dedoremenes* –a Perfect tense participle which indicates what was given and still remains for continual acceptance and adoption) to Peter and his readers. That is, they originate from "His divine power." Since Peter has already characterized Jesus as "God" in v. 1; and the word "power" occurs in v. 16 in regard to the transfiguration of Christ, the word "His" apparently refers to Jesus Christ. After all, God's provisions for "life and godliness" do not occur outside the parameters of His Son. So, whether "His" refers to God or Jesus Christ, this *dunamis* ("power" – occurs again in v. 16 and 2:11) is the *theias* ("divine" – occurs in the NT only here, v. 4, and Acts 17:29) "power" (meaning **ability**) to exclusively provide what is needed. Indeed, the word power "indicates a steady, dynamic energy residing in Christ by virtue of His nature as divine" (Fuhrman, 1967; Thayer, 1977). So, "from God's power proceeds all power to life and godliness" (Bengel, 1971). The means or channel (*dia*) for such provision is *tes epignoseos tou kalesantos hemas idia doxe kai arete* ("the deeper, fuller knowledge of the One Who called us by His own glory and goodness").

The false prophets/teachers (2:1) claimed to possess *gnosis*

(“knowledge”) which they alone could accurately share with the readers. Peter claims that only God possesses *epignoseos* “the deeper, fuller knowledge” which surpasses and supercedes any knowledge the false prophets/teachers had.

After all, this God Who became flesh and blood in Jesus is the very One Who *called* them into a relationship with Himself.

Peter, perhaps, was recalling the words of Jesus recorded in John 15:15-16: “. . . I have called you friends . . . You did not chose Me, but I chose you.” The words “called” (*kaleo*) and “chose” (*eklego*) come from the same root word, with essentially the same meaning.

The following two words “explain what his *Divine power* is: so that God’s natural attributes refers to his *glory*; those which are called moral, to his *virtue*. The two are closely united” (Bengel, 1971).

doxe (“glory”) refers to “the manifestation of the Divine Character in Christ” (Robertson, 149). This is what makes His promises *intensively superior* (v. 4).

arete (“goodness, moral excellence, redemptive acts”). This is what makes His promises *precious* (v. 4). Green suggests “virtue in action, concrete deeds of excellence; saving actions; it is no mere static quality” (63). Bigg offers the following valuable point: “In the present passage the word forms a keynote. Christ has virtue, His disciples must add virtue to faith [cp. v. 5], but the False Teachers reject virtue altogether” (254).

V. 4: *di’ hon ta timia kai megista hemin epaggelmata dedoretai, hina dia touton genesthe theias koinonoi phuseos apophugontes en to kosmo en epithumia phthoras* (“through/by means of which has been given to us the precious and intensively superior promises in order that through/by means of these we may become participants in the divine nature by/after having escaped the corruption/depravity in the world with [its] lustful, covetous desires/passions”)

The “glory and goodness” of God/Jesus Christ are clearly expressed in concrete action/s. Taken together as a package (*di’ hon*), they not only provide what is needed for a *godly life* (v. 3) but also point to OT promises which have been fulfilled in the NT era of Jesus Christ for

His people.

Although particular promises are not here itemized - **unless this is a hint at the promise of His coming (3:4) and the promise of a new heaven and a new earth (3:13)** - the overall sense may simply be *all* the promises which pertain to God's redemptive actions in Jesus in behalf of those who are called and redeemed by Him. Indeed, "the very life of Christ among men, with its **doxa** and **arete** is itself the Promise of Life and the Parousia [coming] expectation is also a faith that He lives and reigns in grace" (Strachan, 125).

So, whatever the exact reference may be, these *promises* are described or characterized by two tremendous terms: *timia* and *megista*.

The word *timia* means "valuable, precious; of great worth or value; held in honor, respected" (Arndt, 825). The word occurs elsewhere in the NT in Acts 5:34; 20:24; 1 Cor. 3:12; Heb. 13:4; Jam. 5:7; 1 Pt. 1:7, 19; Rev. 17:4; 18:12, 16; 21:11, 19.

The word *megista* occurs only here in the NT and is "the superlative of **me-gas** ["large, great"] where it is elative" (Moulton, 393; Blass, 33); that is, the absolute highest quality or degree of something one may experience.

The purpose of these promises is precise: "to be/become participants or sharers in the divine nature."

The word *koinonoi* occurs here and 9 other times in the NT: Mt. 23:30; Lk. 5:10; 1 Cor. 10:18, 20; 2 Cor. 1:7; 8:23; Philemon 17; Heb. 10:33; 1 Pt. 5:1. It speaks of those who share a common connection; those who partake or participate in a common concern; in this case, the connection is with Christ and the concern is doing the will of God. It is the new life and godliness which comes about because of the divine nature which is imparted to and implanted in those who have received "grace and peace in the deeper, fuller knowledge of God, even Jesus our Lord" (v. 2). This common connection does not deify us but it does make us "sharers" with God in the divine nature.

To put it yet another way, just as a foreigner may become a naturalized citizen in a country, "so we are fully transplanted into God's kingdom and are naturalized in it so that what is in that kingdom is properly ours" (Lenski, 262).

Jesus put it this way, "abide in Me and I in you" (John 15:4).

Paul put it this way, “Christ lives in me” (Gal. 2:20); “For me to live is Christ” (Phil. 1:21).

So, just what is the *theias phuseos* (“divine nature”)? As noted above, the word *theias* (“divine”) occurs in the NT only in v. 3, here, and Acts 17:29. It is an adjectival form of the noun *theos* (“God”). It denotes “something superhuman, a predominant power, a final reality, a supreme meaning, which defies direct rational conception” (Kleinknecht, 122).

The word *phuseos* (“nature”) denotes one’s being or essence. This refers to the “new birth as 1 Pet. 1:23” (Robertson, 150). Green agrees and then expands its meaning: “It is intrinsically no different from being born from above (Jn.iii. 3, Jas. i. 18, 1 Pet. 1.23), being the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. vi. 19), being in Christ (Rom.viii. 1) or being the dwelling place of the Trinity (Jn. xiv. 17-23)” (24). The false prophets/teachers “taught that all men are so by nature” (Bigg, 256). But Peter asserts that having this divine nature comes only by grace. So, “what he seems to mean is that believers come to share in some essential qualities that are characteristic of God himself” (Moo, 43).

Maclarens’ contributions to the understanding of this somewhat shocking truth about the divine nature deserves attention:

. . . what it means, mainly, is this – that into every human spirit there may pass a seed of Divine life which will unfold itself there in all purity of holiness, in all tenderness and gentleness of love. . . it is a *becoming*. That is to say, God must ever be passing, moment by moment, into our hearts if there is to be anything godly there. . . . The Christian man lives only by continual derivation of life from God; and for ever and ever the secret of his being and of his blessedness is not that he has become a possessor, but that he has become a partaker, of the Divine nature, a growing thing. (193-194)

Peter then adds another qualifying expression by using an aorist participle to depict simultaneous action: the reception of this divine

nature occurred “after having escaped the corruption in the world.” Indeed, “the approach to God is an ‘escape,’ and not an act of intellectual effort” (Strachan, 126). They did not become partakers of the divine nature “*by* escaping, but *after* escaping the corruption which is in the world” (Bigg, 256).

This word translated “having escaped” (*apophugontes*) occurs in the NT only three times and only by Peter (here; 2:18, 20). It is an obvious reference to that point in time when the new birth occurred. Indeed, “participation in the divine nature is the starting point, [but] not the goal, of Christian living. He writes to those who have *escaped* from the seductive allegiance to society at odds with God” (Green, 65).

The specific words which depict the world or society at odds with God are striking: *en epithumia phthoras* (“in lustful, covetous desires/passions”). The Amplified New Testament translates it as follows: “*the moral decay (rottenness and corruption) that is in the world because of covetousness (lust and greed).*”

The word *phthoras* involves

the corruptibility of man, his subjection to death in himself, not as a once-for-all event, but as an on-going process. . . . it is man’s existence in the world as this is controlled by *sarx* [“flesh”]. . . that which must pass away, as flesh and blood must also pass away. . . . Moral failure consists in succumbing *en epithumia* to corruptibility as though this were the one essential thing: *douloi huparchontes tes phthoras* (“slaves of corruption”) [2:19] – for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. (Harder, 103-104)

Strachan describes it as follows: “the widest sense of inordinate affection for earthly things” (126) or that which is perishable. It is a swipe at moral or ethical decay or decadence, even “gradual dissolution and destruction” (Ibid.). Such is the orientation of those who are degenerate and morally ruined.

So, this “escape” from the corruption and consequent destruction of the world is “an exalted privilege indeed! He is brought into communion with God – an even greater privilege – and ushered into the

ethical sphere to which Peter turns our attention next” (Fuhrman, 323).

For sure, as noted by Green above, this “escape” embraces far more than just an *initial* deliverance from evil – which is, undoubtedly, the primary point Peter is here making by using the aorist participle; [but] it [also] includes a lifetime of warfare against the forces of evil by the power of grace divine.

Moo is convinced of this matter: “Peter sees our participation in the divine nature as consisting especially in the new ability to resist sin through our union with Christ and the indwelling of the Spirit” (44).

In the words of the song, “we’ve only just begun to live.” Some of the specifics within this “ethical sphere” and the “warfare” ahead are now addressed.

B. Developmental Perspective: admonition and addition (1:5-9)

V. 5: *kai auto touto de spouden pasan pareisenegkantes epichoregesate en te pistei humon ten areten, en de te arete gnosin* (“And also, for this very reason, while exerting all effort, in connection with your faith furnish virtue, and in connection with virtue [furnish] knowledge”)

Perhaps too often we think of “faith” as a passive term with total dependent repercussions. However, “the faith principle actually launches one into the throes of endless ethical endeavor” (Fuhrman, 323).

The word *pareisenegkantes* (“while exerting all effort”) is a 1st Aorist participle which indicates the manner or type of action in which the following imperative or command is to be carried out. Strachan’s point is always relevant: this “is a warning against sluggishness and self-indulgence in the spiritual life” (126). Indeed, “we are to bring into this relationship *alongside* what God has done every ounce of determination we can muster” (Green, 66).

The word *epichoregeo* is a 1st Aorist imperative and is composed of two words: *epi* (“upon”) – *choregos* (“chorus-leader”)– “to fit out the chorus” (Robertson, 151) by placing one part upon the other.

So, with this unique combination of words, “Peter urges us to add one thing after another in a beautiful order until the chorus is complete and the Christian life is fully equipped . . . each grace gained helps bring to perfection the other graces” (323) – one upon the others.

Several scholars have provided these meanings: “to furnish, supply besides” (Liddell & Scott, 534); “to provide, to give, to grant, support” (Arndt and Gingrich, 305); “to show or afford by deeds; assisted” (Thayer, 246); “to join to, to furnish one thing after another, so that there be no want or chasm” (Fuhrman, 323).

So, Peter now lays before his readers a list of several *ingredients* [or *notes*, in keeping with the chorus analogy] which are absolutely necessary for accurate and adequate Christian development or maturity in the Christian faith. This imperative verb (*epichoregesate*) is a command which cannot be ignored if such development is to occur. The Christian chorus will only be discordant without each of these being supplied one by the other:

So, “in connection with your faith” [faith being the foundational means by which they have responded to God’s call (v. 3)], **furnish:**

(1) “virtue” (*aretē*) – This word has already been used in v. 3 to describe God’s character in Christ. It consists of moral excellence or goodness and is one choral response which reveals connection with, and following the directions of, the Conductor. Fuhrman points out that “it is valor accrued in the discharge of Christian duty. This is moral power developed by stranding true in the test” (323). Bengel adds these powerful tones: it “makes us active, watchful, circumspect, discreet, so as to consider what is to be done or avoided, for the sake of God, ourselves, and others; and how, where, when, etc., this is to be done” (763). This is the fourth and final appearance of this word in the NT (cp. Philippians 4:8; 1 Pt. 2:9; 2 Pt. 1:3, the latter noted above).

(2) “knowledge” (*gnōsin*) – This is the first of two other occurrences of this word in 2 Pt. (cp. v. 6, used in a mere transitional way only; 3:18). The word signifies “the deeper, more perfect and enlarged knowledge of the Christian religion; the higher knowledge of Christian and divine things which false teachers boast of” (Thayer, 119). This knowledge is “not of spiritual mysteries but of the goodness and reasonableness of the will of God. It is that knowledge

which makes the friend as distinct from the servant, John xv. 15” (Bigg, 258). As Green states, “The cure for false knowledge is not less knowledge, but more” (68). So, it denotes “understanding, implying insight, circumspection, discretion, discernment” (Strachan, 126).

V. 6: (3) “self-control” (*egkrateian*) – This is the 3rd of only two other occurrences of this word in the NT (Acts 24:25; Gal. 5:23). It denotes “holding the passions and desires in hand” (Vincent, 679). Summers suggests “in this instance, relates particularly to the control of one’s sexual impulses” (176). It “avoids evil desires” (Bengel, 764).

This same word is featured as “the fruit of the Spirit” in Gal. 5:23. According to Moo, this “enables believers to avoid falling prey to the temptations – especially sexual – that are so unavoidable in the world we live in” (45).

This, of course, is in distinct contrast to the lack of self-control and/or “covetousness” (*pleonexia*) of the false teachers (2:3, 14) which word is also used in “the sense ‘striving for material possessions [by] taking advantage of one’s neighbor . . . and filthiness in both sex and business life” (Delling, 271). This “covetousness” is the primary governing concern or motive of the false teachers.

(4) “endurance” (*hupomone*) – The word itself is composed of two words: *hupo* (“under”) and *mone* (“remain”), thus indicating “steadfastness, constancy; the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings” (Thayer, 644). It denotes that form of patient endurance “by which adversities and adversaries are endured” (Bengel, 764).

(5) “godliness” (*eusebeian*) – This word means “to be devout, denotes that piety which, characterized by a Godward attitude, does that which is well-pleasing to Him” (Vines, 502). It refers to “a whole manner of life which is as God would have it be; in His presence, you are conscious of the things of God and have real trust in Him . . . not a certain type of perfection but being conscious of God” (Gutzke, 116). It denotes ultimate respect for God and those “aims and acts of godliness” (Thayer, 262) which reveal a connection with Him.

V. 7: (6) “brotherly love” (*philadelphian*) – This word also occurs in

the NT in Rom. 12:10; 1 Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; and 1 Pt. 1:22. [As is easy for the eyes to see, this transliterated Greek word is the name of the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.] It means “love to a brother in the Christian faith” (Arndt and Gingrich, 866). This brotherly affection or fraternal friendliness has a glue-likeness to it: “The godly must cling together like so many brothers (*adelphoi*) of one family, like so many friends (*philoï*), in close friendship and friendliness (*philia*). There can be no *philadelphia* for the ungodly but only complete severance from them” (Lenski, 269).

(7) “godly love” (*agapen*) – This suggests “love towards all, even enemies; not directed by sense and emotion, but by deliberate choice (cf. Matt. v. 44)” (Strachan, 127). Vincent notes two primary meanings within this word: “*tolerance* and *beneficence*” (680).

The summary aspects of “godly love” are well underscored by W. E. Vine:

Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God’s love is seen in the gift of His Son. Love had its perfect expression among men in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christian love is the fruit of the Spirit in the Christian. Christian love has God for its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to His commandments.

Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some sense of affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all and works no ill to any; love seeks opportunity to do good to ‘all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.’

In respect of *agapao* as used of God, it expresses the deep and constant love and interest of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects, producing and fostering a reverential love in them towards the Giver, and a practical love towards those who are partakers of the same, and a desire to help others seek the Giver. (703)

V. 8: *tauta gar humin huparchonta kai pleonazonta ouk argous*

oude akarpous kathistesin eis ten tou kuriou hemon 'Iesou Christou epignosin (“For [with] these ingredients/traits being and increasing within you , it makes [you] neither useless nor fruitless in the deeper, fuller knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”)

The present tense participle *huparchonta* (“being”) indicates that these ingredients/traits are actually possessed by the readers. Also, the present tense participle *pleonazonta* (“increasing”) indicates that these ingredients/traits are actually in the active process of growth and development.

Because of this two-fold reality, Peter applauds them, as such, to underscore the fact that they are neither *argous* nor *akarpous*.

The word *argous* (“useless”) with the negative *ouk* means they were not “barren or idle.” This appears to indicate that they were not “ineffective” (Strachan, 127) or “inactive” (*The New Testament: A New Translation* by Norlie). The idea of not being slow, tardy or sluggish (Trench, 384) is also the key idea here. [This word is found elsewhere in the NT in Mt. 12:36; 20:3, 6; 1 Tim. 5:13; and Tit. 1:12.] The word *akarpous* (“fruitless”) with the negative *ouk-oude* means they were not “unfruitful.” That is, they were not lacking or slacking in exerting efforts (v. 5) of development with regard to the ingredients or traits of Christian maturity noted in verses 5-7. [This word is found elsewhere in the NT in Mt. 13:22; Mk. 4:19; 1 Cor. 14:14; Eph. 5:11; Tit. 3:14; and Jude 12.]

So, Peter is here recognizing and encouraging them for their growth-oriented pathways concerning “the deeper, fuller knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” These positive pathways will prevent them from falling into the negative state or condition which he will describe in more detail in v. 9.

It is, indeed, so true that “true ‘knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ’ should always spark the unquenchable desire to know him better and better and to seek to use that knowledge in the service of others” (Moo, 47). Peter’s readers were obviously in this desirable state.

Peter’s purpose in recognizing this desirable state is to reenforce their determination to recognize and resist the false prophets/teachers whom he will describe more specifically in ch. 2. For now, however, in v. 9, he provides a brief pitch as to the awful condition of those who do not exert energy and efforts toward Christian development.

V. 9: *ho gar me parestin tauta, tuphlos estin muopazon, lethēn labon tou katharismou ton palai autou hamartion* (“For to whom this is not, he is blind, being near-sighted, having received forgetfulness concerning the cleansing of his former sins”)

Again, those who do not persistently practice the ingredients/notes/traits itemized in vs. 5-7 are in a most undesirable state/condition. The word *tuphlos* (“blind”) is the same word used to describe the church at Laodicea (Rev. 3:17). It is used in the NT to describe both physical and spiritual blindness. Here, however, it is a limited form of spiritual blindness, as is indicated by the qualifying present tense participle: *muopazon* (a state of near-sighted/short-sighted). That is, such a person sees the earthly things which are near but does not see the heavenly things which are far off and above this earthly realm. This occurs because people willfully close their eyes to the light of the gospel. When this takes place, “spiritual blindness descends upon the eyes which deliberately look away from the graces of character to which the Christian is called when he comes to know Christ” (Green, 73).

Peter is reminding his readers that this is not the case with them. It is thus another note of encouragement for them to continue exerting efforts in the pursuit of the developmental ingredients/notes/traits of vs. 5-7. On the flip side, this spiritual blindness is the reason why some are actually practicing their self-chosen forms of immoralities and earthly illusions and delusions.

This state or condition of spiritual short-sightedness is now linked to a definite act of causation: *labon lethēn* (“having received forgetfulness”), an aorist participle indicating the undesirable penalty for looking away from God’s desirable ingredients/notes/traits (vs. 5-7). It is a matter of reaping what you sow. By not choosing the good, the bad follows.

The word *lethen* (“forgetfulness”) occurs only here in the NT. It depicts a lethal, deadly form of lethargy (drowsy dullness; sluggishness; lack of energy). In other words, when the positive pursuit of God’s desires are ignored, due to self-inflicted short-sightedness, the negative consequences of *forgetfulness* are set in motion, leading to this spiritual sluggishness.

The *forgetfulness* is in relation to *tou katharismou ton palai autou*

hamartion (“the cleansing of his former sins”).

The word *katharismou* (“cleansing”) is an affirmation that the person/s under consideration did, indeed, receive a moral cleansing, purification, or forgiveness of previous sins. So, the *forgetfulness* “is not a mental process but a practical failure to take into account the true meaning and significance of something” (Moo, 48), in this case, the former forgiveness of sins made a reality through the sacrifice of the Savior. Such forgetfulness leads to attitudes and actions on their part which reveal that the former forgiveness of sins is not actually appreciated and does not make any difference in their present lives.

This, of course, is “the danger that may await those of his readers [in the past, as well as present] who fail to grow in Christian virtues [vs. 5-7], for there is no standing still in the Christian life – one is either moving ahead or falling behind” (Moo, 48). This reality is solidly addressed in Hebrews where it is revealed that one may lose the *sanctification* aspect of salvation, without losing the *regeneration* aspect. “This is tragic emptiness” (Summers, 177).

C. Diligent Pursuit: practice and provision (1:10-11)

V. 10: *dio mallon, adelphoi, spoudasate bebaian humon ten klesin kai eklogen poieisthai; tauta gar poiountes ou me ptaisetete pote* (“Therefore, more than ever, brothers, be diligent/zealous to make firm/reliable for yourselves your calling and election; for [by] continuously doing these things you may not stumble/fall ever”)

The word *dio* (“Therefore”) means because of the truckload of truths just delivered in vs. 1-9, the realization of such should motivate his *adelphoi* (“brothers”) *mallon* (“more than ever”) concerning their devotion to God. By using the aorist imperative (*spoudasate* – “be diligent/zealous”), Peter is stressing the sense of urgency in one’s determination “to continually make for themselves” (present tense, middle voice) “firm or reliable” (*bebaian*) their calling and election. As Maclaren points out, the word carries the idea of “*haste* and eager swiftness” (199). He adds, “diligence is the panacea for all diseases of the Christian life . . . it makes faith fruitful” (201-202, 204).

The word *bebaian* indicates what is “stable, fast, firm, sure, trusty; unshaken, constant” (Thayer, 99). There is no need for guess-work or room for instability in the Christian endeavor. This word will occur again in v. 19. in a comparative, emphatic way. [The word is also found in Rom. 4:16; 2 Cor. 1:7; Heb. 2:2; 3:6, 14; 6:19; 9:17].

It is their “calling and election” [both of which are acts of God] which is the object of this need for stability and surety. The word “calling” refers to their invitation to the gospel of God’s grace by their faith; the word “election” refers to God’s initiative behind the invitation. This surety and stability, therefore, finds its foundation in the revelation of superior scripture, not the imagination of inferior speculations.

Of course, “there is for us no certainty of our election apart from the certainty of our calling, although the one took place in eternity [election], the other in time [calling]” (Lenski, 276). And it is equally true that “not all who hear the Divine Voice progress in Christian conduct, which is the token of election” (Strachan, 126).

But the positive result of this conscientious and continuous (*poiountes* = present tense participle) pursuit of noted diligence, in which the provision of God and the practice of believers match equally, is striking: *ou me ptaisete pote* (“you may not stumble ever”).

The word *ptaisete* (“stumble”) means “to sin against and thus to fall into misery, become wretched” (Thayer, 556). So, Peter reminds or informs his readers (then and now) that the prescription for avoiding such “stumbling” is strict, continuous pursuit of the ingredients noted in vs. 5-7.

This does not mean that *practice makes perfect*, for James 3:2 says, “we all stumble in many ways.” But, again, those who continually practice the principles involved and embedded in God’s prescription for specified ingredients or notes (vs. 5-7) will be so captivated by love for and obedience to God that other options will pale in comparison, and be ignored, resisted, and/or mimized.

Plus, the sins which are committed by even the most conscientiously committed Christians will be continually met with a cleansing that is “renewed daily by daily forgiveness” (Lenski, 277).

It is clear, then, that Peter is addressing the *sanctification* aspect of salvation: “the onward march along the King’s highway” (Bigg, 261) in service to God and others. It may be lost.

So, the stumbling takes place because of the short-sighted form of blindness and forgetfulness noted in verse 9. And as stated above, the *forgetfulness* “is not a mental process but a practical failure to take into account the true meaning and significance of something” (Moo, 48), in this case, the former forgiveness of sins made a reality through the sacrifice of the Savior. Such forgetfulness leads to attitudes and actions on their part which reveal that the former forgiveness of sins is not actually appreciated and does not make any difference in their present lives. Stumbling is thereby unavoidable! It means the loss of the *sanctification* aspect of their salvation on this earth.

V. 11: *houtos gar plousios epichoregethetai humin he eisodos eis ten aionion Basileian tou kuriou hemon kai soterou Iesou Christou* (“for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ shall be abundantly or richly supplied”)

The word *houtos* (“in this way”) is an adverbial repetition of the word *tauta* (“these things, in vs. 8, 9, 10: i.e., the ingredients, notes, traits which are listed in vs. 5-7).

The word *he eisodos* (“the entrance”) refers to the *way of admission or way in* to a particular location: in this case, “the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”: that is, heaven, where the kingdom or reign of Jesus Christ will find ultimate and complete fulfillment, and “includes more than duration of time” (Vincent, 682) – as the qualifying word *aionion* (“eternal”) makes definite.

Both the entrance and the essential nature of the kingdom “shall be abundantly or richly supplied” to those who energetically and consistently “supplied” (v. 5) their lives with the God-ordained and God-order prescription of godly ingredients/notes/traits (vs. 5-7) which are absolutely necessary for “life and godliness” (v. 3).

With amazingly inspired direction, Peter pieces together in a climatic fashion this promise (v. 11) as a defensive/offensive stand against those forces of fierce opposition to God’s will and ways.

The kingdom of God has come, is coming, and will come to its conclusion in the future when sins, sorrows, trials, temptations, tears, weaknesses, and tragedies will be no more. With this assurance, Peter sounds the affirmative alarm that “our effusive welcome into this eternal kingdom should motivate us to move forward in the Christian life” (Moo, 49).

D. Desired Perseverance: reminders and reflections (1:12-15)

V. 12: *Dio melleso aei humas hupomimneskein peri touton kaiper eidotas kai esterigmenous en te parouse aletheia* (“Therefore, I shall always be ready to keep on reminding you of these things even though you know them and have been/are firmly established in the present truth”)

Dio (“Therefore”) – Because they (1) are anchored in the faith (v. 1); (2) are experiencing the multiplication of grace and peace concerning the deeper, fuller knowledge of God/Jesus Christ; (3) are recipients of everything that contributes to life and godliness; (4) are recipients of those divine promises with regard to their being partakers of the divine nature; (5) are escapees from the dominion of worldly lusts; (6) are diligently pursuing those godly ingredients which make them useful and fruitful concerning the deeper, fuller knowledge of Jesus Christ; (7) are not forgetful of the cleansing of their sins; (8) are not stumbling around in darkness/blindness since they are actively practicing those godly ingredients; and (9) are assured of their final entry into the eternal, heavenly kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ . . .

melleso aei human hupomimneskein peri touton (“I shall always be ready to keep on reminding you of these things”)

In keeping with the “diligence” (v. 5) by which his readers were pursuing the Christian course, Peter likewise asserts and assures them of his own diligence. He will continue to encourage them about the importance and necessity of the things noted above under the word *dio*. It has been said that repetition is one of the surest ways of learning. So, he will “keep on reminding” (Present tense) of these truths.

This verb *hupomimneskein* (“reminding”) indicates his determination to “bring up, call to mind” (Arndt and Gingrich, 853), “to awaken, to

refer to” (Strachan, 128), “to keep before their minds” (Green, 77) the utter sense of urgency about these truths. After all, the mind and heart must always be fed with that which generates healthy growth and development in the Christian faith. Forgetfulness is one of the key stumbling blocks in the basic, foundational functioning of life. Although forgetfulness is common in regard to where we left the keys, what we did with the mail, why we performed poorly on an exam, and other such realities, forgetfulness may be a curse or crippling matter in regard to healthy growth and development in the Christian faith.

As Green *reminds* us, “such is the (sometimes wilful) forgetfulness of the human heart that one of the prime functions of a Christian minister must be to keep the basic facts of Christian truth and conduct always before the minds of his congregation” (77). Plus, the qualifying word *aei* (“always, constantly”) adds strength to Peter’s determination. He “is convinced that there is increasing need of admonition, because of the increasing corruption of the wicked” (765) – cp. chapter 2.

It is no surprise to admit that initial zeal for God and godliness have waned in the lives of many believers/disciples/followers of Jesus throughout the history of Christianity. The need, therefore, for constant and continual reminders is no small concern.

It is such concern as this which likewise motivated Paul to encourage other believers to keep on the firing line, as in Romans 12:1-2:

And so, dear Christian friends, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is. (*New Living Translation*)

To already “know” and “be established in the present truths” is no acceptable reason for laxity or excuse for failure to keep on reminding believers about such truths. The word *eidotas* (“know”) is a perfect tense participle and indicates a current state of “agreeing” (Robertson,

153) with those truths.

The word *esterigmenous* (“have been/are firmly established”) is another perfect tense participle, indicating a current state of solid strength. But “Peter is eager to make them stronger” (Robertson, 154).

The strengthening is by God, the Lord, or the truth, but also men. It may be accomplished, besought, or commanded. It presupposes that the Christians who are to be strengthened are under assault and in danger of becoming uncertain or slothful in their faith or walk. . . . The effect or aim of strengthening is the impregnability of Christian faith in spite of the troubles which have to be endured. (Harder, 656)

After all, the tugs of worldly temptations to forget God and His role for believers in this world are always in motion. J.B. Phillips translates a portion of Rom. 12: 2 as follows: “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold.” So, again, the need for constant *reminders*, such as Peter here promises to provide his readers, falls within a most acceptable framework of care, concern, appropriateness, and urgency.

V. 13: *dikaion de hegoumai, eph’ hoson eimi en touto to skenomati, diegeirein humas en hupomnesei* (“And I regard it right for myself, as long as I am in this body, to keep on arousing/waking you up by way of a reminder”)

The word *hegoumai* (“I regard”) is a present tense, middle voice, which indicates that Peter is thinking of or considering his own responsibility (“for myself”) in the case at hand.

The word *dikaion* (“right”) means “upright, good, just, proper; honest, fair.” [This word also comes from the same root for the words: (1) *dikaiosune* (“righteousness, justification”) – (2) *dikaioo* (“to put into a right relationship” with God; to justify, to acquit, to declare and treat as righteous”) – (3) *dikaiokrisia* (“righteous judgment”) – (4) *dikaion* (“righteous deed, judgment, acquittal”) – and (5) *dikaio* (“justly, uprightly”).]

The phrase “as long as I am in this body” suggests Peter’s determination to be faithful to these “reminders” as long as he lives; no retirement regarding his declaration of determined faithfulness. So, as long as he is alive and able, he will “keep on arousing/waking you up by way of a reminder.” His sermon may not be long but his reminders will be!

It is interesting that the word for “body” is not the usual one (*soma*) but *skenoma* which occurs in the NT only here, v. 14, and Acts 7:46. It “carries the idea of *brief duration* – a frail *tent*, erected for a night” (Vincent, 683).

The word *diegeirein* (“to keep on arousing/waking you up”) is a present tense infinitive. [The word is found elsewhere in the NT in Mt. 1:24; Mk. 4:38, 39; Lk. 8:24 in the sense of being “awakened” or “roused from sleep.” It occurs in Jn. 6:18 in the sense of the sea being stirred up. It also occurs in 2 Pt. 3:1 in the same sense as used here.]

So, he will “make his readers keep on remembering by his reminding them” (Lenski, 282).

Truth deserves repetitious hearing – in the past, the present, and the future!

V. 14: *eidos hoti tachine estin he apothesis tou skenomatos mou kathos kai ho kurios hemon ‘Iesous Christos edelosen moi* (“knowing that the removal of my body is soon/in the near future, even as our Lord Jesus Christ indicated to me”)

The word *eidos* (“knowing”) is a perfect tense participle which indicates a present state of being in which one has come “to have realized, perceived, learned to know” (Seesemann, 116) something. In this case, it is the brevity of his life.

The word *apothesis* (“removal, putting off”; lay aside [Weymouth]; fold up [Moffatt]) is found only one other time in the NT (1 Pt. 3:21). When linked with the word *skenomatos* (“tent, tabernacle, body” – cp. v.13), it is a “euphemism for death” (Arndt and Gingrich, 90).

When linked with “the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (v. 11), it means “to move out of a temporary tent and into the eternal kingdom” (Summers, 178). The picture here, of course, which prompted Peter’s use of this expression is that of the Exodus wilder-

ness wanderings when the exiles from Egypt lived in temporary tents for 40 years. Peter, however, here stretches the idea of temporary into permanency.

The word *tachine* may be translated “soon, speedy, sudden, swift, imminent, violent, or in the near future”). The word *estin* (“is”) is a present tense verb denoting immediacy which reinforces the urgency of the matter.

However, the meaning of this expression is not so clear. Does it mean that Peter senses his death “to be near or violent or both” (Robertson, 154-155)? If *violent*, then it could refer to the words of Jesus to him in John 21:18-19. Green leans toward this conclusion and states: “He had for years been living with death; he knew that his lot would be to die in a horrible and painful way” (79). This would also flow with the concluding expression in this verse: “even as our Lord Jesus indicated to me” (that is, in John 21:18-19). However, if *soon* is the proper meaning, then it could be “an allusion to his advanced age” (Vincent, 684). Either interpretation seems sensible and “agrees with the urgent tone of Peter here” (Robertson, 154).

V. 15: *spoudaso de kai hekastote echein humas meta ten emen exodon ten touton mnemen poieisthai* (“And I will be diligent also [for] you to keep and to remember these things at all times after my departure”)

Peter now declares that the diligence he desired from them (cp. 1:5, 10) will now be matched by his own diligence for them. He does not specify exactly how or in what manner his diligence will take place after his departure or exodus from this planet. But since his expressed desire is for them “to keep and to remember these things at all times,” he is undoubtedly referring to what he has just written and the continued possession of it which they will have.

He has written of his determination *hupomimneskein* (“to keep on reminding” in v. 12), and of a *hupomnesei* (“reminder” in v. 13). So, he now closes this section with another form of the word “remember” (*mnemen*) which occurs nowhere else in the NT. This written document will be the most appropriate way for him to continue to influence them, even when his physical presence is absent.

After all, the major thrust of this section is desired perseverance!

E. Display of Power: visualization and verification (1:16-18)

V. 16: *Ou gar sesophismenoi muthois exakolouthesantes egnorisamen hmin ten tou kuriou hmon 'Iesou Christou dunamin kai parousian all' epoptai genethentes tes ekeinou megaleiotetos* (“For we did not depend on cleverly made up myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but were eyewitnesses of that Majesty”)

Peter now uses a word [with the negative particle *ou*] which he uses in only two other places in the NT (2:2, 15): *ou exakolouthesantes* (“we did not depend on”) - a 1st Aorist participle which denotes qualifying antecedent action before the main verb *egnorisamen* (“we made known”).

The word *sophizo* (“cleverly made up, devised”) occurs only one other place in the NT (2 Tim. 3:15 – in a positive way). Here it is used in a negative way: “artfully framed by human cleverness” (Vincent, 685). It is here used as a perfect tense, passive voice participle to denote an existing, present threat to his readers. It is a verbal qualifier of the word *muthois* (“myths, fables”) and occurs also in 1Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4; and Tit. 1:14. The word refers to “false tales, fictions” (Bigg, 265). So, taken together, Peter declares “we did not pass on only myths and not the realities of revelation [because] Christians have nothing in common with the insubstantial pseudo-wisdom of heresies” (Wilckens, 527-528).

The expression *ten tou kuriou hmon dunamin kai parousian 'Iesou Christou* (“the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”) will be identified in the next few words as *megaleiotetos* (“Majesty” – occurring only 2 other times in the NT: Lk. 9:43; Ac. 19:27) which was the gloriously divine Transfiguration (Mt. 17:1-8; Mk. 9:2-8; Lk. 9:28-36) of which Peter, James, and John were *epoptai* (“eyewitnesses”). It manifested or displayed God’s presence in divine power. The word *parousian* (“coming”) will occur again in 3:4, 12 in regard to His second coming.

The word *all'* (“but, rather, on the contrary”) is a strong adversative

conjunction denoting definite opposition to the cleverly made up myths! Indeed, “we [Peter, James, John] were eyewitnesses of that majesty.” Reference, of course, is to the Transfiguration (Mt. 17: 1-13).

These men were influenced to the end of their ministry by that vision. James died a martyr for his testimony; John said they beheld His glory (1 John 1:14); and Peter insisted that they heard God say, **This is my beloved Son** (v. 17). Thus their vision of Christ’s majesty and God’s voice affirming Christ’s sonship were true evidences that distinguished the incarnation of the Second Person of the Godhead from the spurious claims of heathen myths about the descent of their gods to earth. (Fuhrman, 326)

The “Majesty” is none other than God Himself.

V. 17: *labon gar para theou patros timen kai doxan phones enechtheises auto toiasde hupo tes megaloprepous doxes, ‘O huios mou ho agapetos mou houtos estin eis hon ego eudokesa* (“For having received honor and glory from God the Father, a voice of such quality came to Him by means of the Majestic Glory, ‘This is My beloved Son in/with Whom I am well pleased’”)

V. 18: *kai tauten ten phonen hemeis ekousamen ex ouranou enechtheisan sun auto ontes en to hagio orei* (“and we ourselves heard this voice when it came out of heaven , being together with Him on the holy mountain”)

The “honor” (*timen*) was the fact that it was God Himself Who spoke. The “glory” (*doxan*) was the light or manifestation of God’s presence which radiated and saturated the area.

This voice of God had spoken to Jesus at His baptism: “You are My beloved Son, with You I am well pleased” (Mk. 1:11). And now the testimony from that same voice at the Transfiguration is directed to the three disciples: “This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.

What could have better qualified them for such qualitative *visualization* and *verification* with regard to the divine display of power.

F. Declaration of Prophets: information and inspiration (1:19-21)

V. 19: *kai echomen bebaioteron ton prophetikon logon, ho kalos poieite prosechontes hos luchno phainonti en auchmero topo, heos ou hemera diaugase kai phosphoros anateile en tais kardiais humon* (“And we have the well-founded prophetic word, to which ye are responding correctly, by paying close attention to [it], as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day may dawn and the morning star may arise in your hearts”)

The word *bebaioteron* (“well-founded”) occurs for the second and final time in this writing (cp. 1:10). It is a word “that strikes directly and conclusively at Libertinism [lack of moral restraints or immorality; loose opinions about religion]. . . a second witness, which, for the purpose of the second chapter, is even stronger than his first” (Bigg, 268). It is used to strengthen the fact that “the Old Testament is as much the voice of Christ as the New” (Ibid, 269). It means “‘standing firm on the feet,’ ‘steadfast,’ ‘maintaining firmness or solidity’ . . . sure, reliable, but also valid; its declarations are fulfilled for faith by their enactment . . . grounded in an event” (Schlier, 602). The event is, collectively speaking, the testimony of the OT prophets. So, confidence in the reliability of the prophet word should lead to a firm adherence to its teachings” (Moo, 76).

This is why, of course, Peter compliments them by acknowledging that they “respond correctly by paying close attention to[it] – the latter being a present tense participle denoting appropriate responsiveness on their part to that prophetic word, as opposed to drinking the damnable and demeaning false teachings of the false prophets (cp. ch. 2). As Vincent puts it: “we can readily understand how the long line of prophetic scriptures, fulfilled in so many ways in the life of Jesus, would be a mightier form of evidence than the narrative of one single event in Peter’s life” (Lumby, 786).

The prophetic word is now placed in the context of light, as opposed to the darkness of the false prophets/teachings. The expressions are of a comparative nature (*hos* – “as”).

The word *luchno* (“lamp”) “is designed to characterise the task of the *prophetikos logos*” (Michaelis, 327): it is used in the darkness of night to shine, to expose, to inform.

The word *phainonti* (“shining”) is a present tense participle indicating

what the prophetic word is always doing, i.e., bringing forth evidence into the light to be clear or manifest (Thayer, 647-648). This shining occurs *en auchmero topo* (“in a dark place”), “a peculiar expression that occurs only here in the New Testament in association with the idea of darkness with squalor [misery and dirt; moral filth], dryness, and general neglect” (Vincent, 687).

This *shining* will last *heos hemera diaugase* (“until day may dawn”). When the light of day appears, there will no longer be need for a lamp. Although the word *diaugase* is in the subjunctive mood (“may”), it is a “usual construction for future time” (Robertson, 158). It is “the picture of light *breaking through* the gloom (Vincent, 687).

phosphoros anateile (“morning or day star may arise”). The word *phosphorus* occurs only here in the NT. It means “the sun which springs up to dispel the darkness of the night. The word is the one for the ‘source of light’ rather than the regular one for ‘star’ [i.e., *aster*] (Summers, 179).

The verb *anateile* (“may arise”) is another subjunctive mood, and like *diaugase* (“may dawn”) is a “usual construction for future time” (Robertson, 158).

So, taken together, these unique expressions in the NT highlight the utter significance and authority of the OT prophetic word. It shines as a lamp in the darkness of night.

Plus, the sphere in which this shining takes place is *en tais kardiais humon* (“in your hearts”). Lenski summarizes it so aptly:

Both the dawning day and its accompanying daystar’s appearing above the horizon are objective. Yet ‘in your hearts’ modifies both and is subjective. For these hearts will *apprehend* what is happening; the hearts of all other men will not apprehend. The approaching light of the eternal day will not merely come on the outside, it will fill the hearts of the believers. Peter states it beautifully and truly indeed. . . . As this dawn breaks more and more it will supersede the lamp of the prophetic Word just as fulfillment always supercedes prophecy. The readers will repeat the experience of the apostles: the more they became eyewitnesses of the majesty of Jesus, the more what

they actually saw in Jesus took the place of what the old prophets had foretold about him (John 1:14). This will be true to the greatest degree when the dawn of the eternal day actually breaks (note the aorists in the ‘till’ clause). It is quite correct to say that the believers who are living near the end of time will know what is taking place and will lift up their hearts in joyous expectation just as Jesus says in Luke 21:28. (295)

After Green’s evaluation of the possible interpretations of this verse and its connections with the two which follow, his assessment, though notably briefer than Lenski, is, nevertheless, point on:

Whatever the precise details, the main emphasis is manifest: we are on pilgrimage throughout our lives in this dark world. God has graciously provided us with a lamp, the Scriptures. If we pay attention to them for reproof, warning, guidance and encouragement we shall walk safely. If we neglect them, we shall be engulfed in darkness. The whole course of our lives ought to be governed by the Word of God. (89)

V. 20: *touto proton giniskontes hoti pasa propheteia graphes idias epiluseos ou ginetai* (“Knowing this above all else, that all prophecy of Scripture does not arise from/originate by one’s own personal or private origination”)

The expression *giniskontes touto proton* (‘knowing this above all else’) reflects agreement with what he said in v. 19: *ho kalos poieite prosechontes ton prophetikon logon* (“to which you are responding correctly, by paying close attention to [it]). So, the idea is *since you already know this* (Bengel, 768; Robertson, 158). Williams translates, “because you recognize this truth above all else.”

But since you already know or recognize what truth? The truth that “no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation” (NIV).

The key to understanding correctly is the word *epiluseos* (“exposition; expounded according to private opinion” (Buchsel, 337) or “private origination” (Robertson, 159). This noun occurs only here in the entire NT. [The verb form of this word appears twice: (*epiluo* – “expounded” – cp. Mk. 4:34; “shall be determined” – cp. Acts 19:39).]

Select comments from several scholars underscore the importance of this word: “It means *loosening, untying*, as of *hard knots* of scripture” (Vincent, 688). The concept is that of “an ‘untying’ or ‘unraveling’” (Moo, 78). It means “*a loosening, unloosing*” (Thayer, 240) or a “private untying” (Green, 89) by “the prophet himself” (Strachan, 132); “. . . no prophet starts a prophecy himself” (Robertson, 159). No prophecy “proceeds from the prophet’s own knowledge or invention, or was the offspring of [his] calculation or conjecture” (Fuhrman, 326). Any doubts or hesitancy about this meaning is objectively stated in the following verse.

V. 21: *ou gar thelemati anthropou henechthe propheteia pote, alla hupo pneumatos hagiou pheromenoi elalesan apo theou anthropoi* (“for no prophecy has ever been produced by the will of man, but men spoke as a result of/because of/from God, while being guided by the Holy Spirit”)

gar is the word of verification, clarification, confirmation: “for, since.” After all, “Peter is not here warning against personal interpretation of prophecy, but against the folly of upstart prophets with no impulse from God” (Robertson, 159). Or to put it another way, in this verse, Peter is reenforcing, straightening or strengthening most objectively what he said in v. 20: The predictions by the prophets “did not arise from their private views about what the visions they received meant; ‘for,’ as he now explains further, what the prophets said did not have “its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (Moo, 78).

To speak “from God” does not mean that the prophets were simply passive receptors of God’s dictations to them. After all, serious and detailed evaluation of those words reveal that God used the words, styles, and situations in which they thought and lived. So, the apt conclusion to draw is that the words the prophets chose to use “were

also the [very] words that God wanted them to use to communicate the message he intended” (Moo. 79). It was a cooperative manner between them and the Holy Spirit Who inspired them! This is the only mention of the Holy Spirit in 1 Peter, and occurs in connection with Him being “the source of prophetic inspiration” (Strachan, 132).

THE BAD

III PROPHETS OF DESTRUCTION (2:1-22)

A. Description (2:1-3)

V. 1: *Egenonto de kai pseudoprophetai en to lao, hos kai en humin esontai pseudodidaskaloi* (“Now there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you”)

In addition to the ancient positive prophecies just mentioned in 1:20, 21 [cp. 3:2], Peter also references the ancient pseudo-prophets among the Hebrews/Israelites.

These false prophets were counterfeits who spoke falsely and set forth deceitful words of promise. In seeking the favor and popularity of the people, these pretenders flattered people with promises of prosperity and peace. Their motives were also colored by their desire for monetary gain (Mayor, 115). [False prophets are also mentioned in Mt.7: 15; 24:11, 24; Mk. 13:22; Lk. 6:26; Acts. 13:6; 1 Jn. 4:1; Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10.]

So, in the lineup with them, Peter notes that *pseudodidaskaloi* (“false teachers” – the only occurrence of this word in the NT) will be among his readers. He uses the future tense in *esontai* – “shall/will be”); in *pareisaxousin* – “shall/will bring in”; in v. 2: *exakolouthesousin* – “shall/will obey, follow”; in *blasphemethesetai* – “shall/will be maligned/slandered/insulted”; and v. 3 in *amporeusontai* – “shall/will exploit”; and in 3:3: *eleusontai* – “shall/will come.”

However, in verses 10-14, 17, and 18, he uses the present tense. In 2:15, he uses the aorist. So, there are at least three different ways to view these false teachers. Perhaps, it is best to simply regard the matter as follows: Just as Jesus warned His followers in Mt. 24:11, 24 and Mk. 13:22 about false teachings, so here Peter does the same. “There

always have been and there always will be false teachers among the people of God” (Green, 93). So, “the false teaching infecting their community should be no surprise” (Moo, 92).

Nevertheless, Peter continues to give a description of these false teachings from these prophets of destruction:

hoitines pareisaxousin (“they shall/will secretly bring in”)

The **first** description involves a word which appears nowhere else in the NT: *pareisaxousin* which is composed of two words – *para* (“beside, by the side, near, along”) and *eisago* (“lead, bring in”).

The idea is that these false teachers taught some elements of truth, and then also “brought in beside or along with those truths” varying shades of untruth. So, the idea is that of bringing those false teachings into the mix “secretly.” Bigg says it signifies “the idea of creeping along under some sort of cover” (271). Liddell and Scott notes that it, and similar words, convey the sense of “a slipping in; introduced privily or secretly; to insinuate one’s self; a loop-hole; to get in by stealth” (1119). So, the idea is that of disguising or deceiving people in a twisted, roundabout way.

haireseis apoleias (“heresies of destruction”)

The **second** description involves the nature of their deception. These “heresies” refer to “the self-chosen authority of a teacher [in a] relatively disputable doctrine/teaching within a school or party of hostile societies. . . The greater seriousness consists in the fact that *haireseis* affect the foundation of the Church in doctrine” (Schlier, 180, 183).

It involves the idea of “taking or conquering” (Liddell and Scott, 41) something: in this case, the prophetic word of scripture! The aim of these false teachers is the result after which they are striving: the *apoleias* (“destruction, utter ruin”) of God’s Word. They are, indeed, “corrupting tenets” (Strachan, 133). Even if these false teachers are identified as Christians [to be seen later], “personal motives may sadly deteriorate, and the influence of the life may breed corruption” (Ibid.).

Lenski leaves no doubt regarding his understanding of the matter:

. . . these lying teachers bring upon their own selves

‘swift perdition,’ i.e. eternal damnation in hell. *Apoleia* means no less. The fact that they do it by means of their ‘heresies of perdition’ is rather plain. . . . All self-chosen views or doctrines that bear the stamp of perdition and bring ‘swift perdition’ upon their advocates are *heresies* in the gravest sense of the word, no matter when they are held. Tone down the one word as much as one may, the other puts hell (perdition) into it nevertheless. (304)

Moo agrees with Lenski’s position:

As a metaphor for judgment, the word does not carry the literal meaning of ‘annihilate’ or ‘cease to exist,’ but denotes the eternal loss of fellowship with God. . . . Those who follow the theology of the false teachers will be led not to final salvation but to condemnation” (93).

So, it is more than interesting to follow the subsequent uses of this word *apoleia* 5 other times in 2 Pt.: here (twice), 3; and 3:7, 16. The word is found elsewhere in the NT in: Mt. 7:13; 26:8; Mk. 14:4; Jn. 17:12; Acts 8:20; 25:16; Ro. 9:22; :Phil. 1:28; 3:19; 2 Th. 2:3; 1 Ti. 6:9; Heb.10:39; Rev. 17:8, 11.

kai ton agorasanta autous despoten arvoumenoi (“even denying the Sovereign Lord Who bought them”)

The **third** description of these false teachers also qualifies the nature of their heresies. The word *arvoumenoi* is a present tense, middle voice participle which indicates action which comes back upon oneself. The word means “denying, disowning, renouncing, refusing” to acknowledge Jesus as the Sovereign Lord. In other words, by their licentious lifestyle, they revealed they were not active participants in the holy lifestyle which being a follower of Jesus Christ demands. Therefore, their denial consisted of both their false teaching and bad behaviors: total incompatibility with submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ who *agorasanta autous* (“bought them”).

This latter expression involves lack of appreciation, due to totally self-inflicted indifference, concerning the sacrificial price which was paid to secure their redemption or release from such powers

of evil which they so readily and energetically adopted and pursued. So, by denying Him, they denied themselves. Again, the middle voice denotes reflexive action back upon oneself. No claims to knowing Christ were worthy of belief in such a situation.

Let us not forget that the word *kurios* (“Lord”) “does not mean merely ‘master,’ it means ‘owner’ and it suggests an unconditional authority, to which the only thing in us that corresponds is abject and unconditional submission” (Maclaren, 216). The false teachers did not yield daily to Christ as the Master for whom absolute submission is not an option.

It is, indeed, no mere vague position that people take in this regard. It is not surprising that some people are antagonistic to Christ and His church. What is somewhat surprising is that some people profess to know Him, even attend worship services on Sunday, and yet actually demonstrate little to no consistent interest in regard to absolute submission to Him as ‘owner’ of their life’s aspirations, inclinations, and inspirations!

epagontes heautois tachinen apoleian (“bringing upon themselves swift destruction”)

This **fourth** description of the false teachers is also loaded with another awful feature. It would not be the Christ they denied or the readers whom they were deceiving, but their very selves who would suffer from the consequences of their teachings and behaviors. The expression *tachinen apoleian* (“swift destruction”) is itself horrifying enough. The word *tachinen* is used only by Peter in the NT, the first occurrence being in 1:14 of this writing. It is an adjective qualifying what kind of destruction will occur. It means “‘speedy’ with the added idea of ‘sudden’” (Moulton and Milligan, 627).

Whatever else may be implied in this word, it “indicates what happens in the instant of death” (Lenski, 305).

The word *apoleian* (“destruction”) appears for the second time in this verse and will occur again in v. 3; 3:7, 16. See above for the meaning of this word. “This is always the tragedy of such false prophets” (Robertson, 161).

The **fifth** description of the false teachers has widespread ramifications: its *visible* results or impacts on others.

V. 2: *kai polloi exakolouthesousin auton tais aselgeiais* (“and many will follow their sensualities/indecencies/vices”)

The word *polloi* (“many”) depicts a crew of followers.

The word *aselgeiais* (“sensualities/indecencies/vices”) is found

9 other times in the NT: Mk. 7:22; Ro. 13:13; 2 Cor. 12:21;

Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 1 Pt. 4:3; verses 7 & 18 of this chapter; and

Jude 4. The word means “wanton lawless insolence; one who ac-

knowledges no restraints, who dares whatsoever his caprice and

wanton petulance may suggest, including acts of lasciviousness”

(Trench, 56-57). This also involves insults, mistreatments, and

damage to others; being reckless, heartless, without reason or excuse

for unjustified, unrestrained actions toward others. It includes bold

rudeness, insulting behavior or speech; intentional disregard of the

feelings of others. So, a rather common portrait of *polloi* (“many”).

The **sixth** description of the false teachers also has widespread ramifications: its **verbal** results or impacts from others.

di' hous he hodos tes aletheias blasphemethesetai (“because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed”)

The *way of truth* is one way by which the Christian faith is identified.

For example, in Acts 9:2; 22:4; and 24:14, it is called “the Way.”

In Acts 16:17, it is called “the way of salvation.” In Acts 18:25, it

is called “the way of the Lord.” Peter calls it “the right way” in 2:15,

and “the way of righteousness” in 2:21. The expression “contains the

ideas of ‘genuineness.’ It combines the ideas of the knowledge of

God and His purposes in Christ; and of the human obligation to

right living that springs from it” (Strachan, 134).

Jesus, of course, called Himself “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” in John 14:6.

The word *blasphemethesetai* (“shall be blasphemed”) means “to be evil spoken of; to be reviled, to be cursed, to be condemn.” A host of such verbal onslaughts typically follow from outsiders against the Christian faith when they see professing Christians consistently violating the Christian faith by practicing false teachings and bad behaviors. This is, of course, a somewhat expected outcome “by those who are without [non-Christians], and cannot distinguish between true and false Christians” (Bengel, 769). It creates confusion on their part, to say the very least.

The **seventh** description of the false teachers is their corrupt motives. V. 3: *kai en pleonexia* (“and in greed”). The expression *en pleonexia* (“in greed”) indicates covetousness, “denoting the element or sphere in which the evil is wrought” (Vincent, 690). They are motivated by making money or extracting money from others, “the love of which is a root of all sorts of evil” (1 Tim. 6:10).

The **eighth** description of the false teachers is their fake words. *plastois logois humas emporeusontai* (“they will exploit you with made-up, invented words”)

That these “false teachers should not only demand remuneration but be extortionate in their demands, is probable enough” (Bigg, 274). After all, the word *emporeusontai* means “to traffic in a thing” (Ibid, 273), in this case *money*. They will “trade you in” for green! The means by which they trafficked in money-making was *plastois logois* (“made-up, invented”) words. The word *plastois* occurs only here in the NT and means “words moulded at will to suit their vain imaginations” (Vincent, 690). That is, their words were moulded or made-up as from clay; they simply made-up stories without any degree of reality or substance. The Berkeley Version of the NT translates it “counterfeit arguments”; the New English Bible and The Twentieth Century NT translate it “fabrications”; and Moffatt translates it “cunning arguments.” The picture is poisonous: “they have no concern for the sheep but only for shearing their wool” (Lenski, 307).

The **ninth** description of the false teachers is fatal enough: *hois to krima ekpalai ouk argei kai he apoleia auton ou vustazei* “whose judgment for a long time is not idle and their destruction is not asleep”)

Peter here uses a parallelism: that is, the use of two figures of speech to express something which is similar in nature; in this case, the doom of these false teachers. The OT prophets used this literary device rather often. So, the judgment or condemnation of these false teachers is as old as the judgment or condemnation of the OT false prophets. It has been simmering, gathering, or impending for a long time (Strachan,

134). In other words, it is “not idle” but rather “is full of vigor” (Bengel, 769).

This judgment is being stored up in the Judge and will eventually spill out or break forth. Judgement delayed is not judgment denied. Unlike earthly judges who sometimes do not carry their judgments, this one is inevitable. In human terms, this Judge is not twiddling His thumbs while sitting on His throne. There is not an *idle mind* in this Judge.

Furthermore, their destruction is inevitable because the One Who will execute it is “wide awake and ready to pounce upon them” (Summers, 181). The very word which was used of sleeping virgins in Mt. 25:5 is the same word used here: “It is used of the instruments of God’s anger employed against those guilty of social abuses” (Strachan, 134). This is the third time in vs. 1-3 that the word *apoleia* is used; cp. previous comments about it.

The words “judgment” and “destruction” are mentioned again in 3:7. So, the judgment and destruction “has long been gathering momentum but is now impending” (Furhman, 330). There is no time for sleep or slumber because the Judge is engaged in neither.

B. Demonstrations (2:4-6)

In this section, Peter provides three examples or demonstrations from the past of God’s judgment in action: angels (v. 4) – ancient world (v. 5) – Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 6).

V. 4: *Ei gar ho theos aggelon hamartesan ton ouk epheisato alla seirais zophou tartaros paredoken eis krisin teroumenous* (“For since God did not spare the angels when they sinned but delivered to pits of darkness, having put in hell, being reserved for judgment”)

The word *Ei* (“if”) indicates the beginning of a 1st class conditional clause or one which assumes reality – and may be translated “since.” The conclusion will be fulfilled in v. 9.

God’s judgment is a matter of such seriousness and surety that no one is exempted or will escape it. After all, even the “angels” were not spared from it. There is not any revelation from scripture – only ra-

tionals from speculation - as to which angels and what sin the angels committed. This writer will not affirm any of them or advance any of his own. For some reason known only to God, their identification was not properly specified and speculations are probably unnecessary. Peter's pitch is simple and significant enough: even they did not avoid or escape proper judgment. Neither will anyone else, despite what the false teachers may claim.

The expression *seirais zophou* ("pits of darkness") is unique to Peter and Jude. However, the word *seirais* is found only here in the NT. It means "to fasten or bind together, as a chain to darkness" Thayer, 572).

The word *zophou* is here and vs. 17, as well as Jude 6 and 13. It means "the blackness of darkness" (Thayer, 272). Trench says it represents a "strong contrast to life and light . . . to signify the darkness of that shadowy land where light is not" (373). Whatever the implications that may be triggered from these perspectives, the fact of "gloom, despair, and agony on me" is the proper conclusion to draw.

The word *tartarosas* ("having put in hell") occurs only here in the NT. [It is not the strongest word for "hell" (*gehenna*) in the NT (Mt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mk. 9:43, 45, 47; Lk. 12:5; Ja. 3:6), nor the word *hades* (Mt. 11:23; 16:18; Lk. 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; 1 Co. 15:55; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13,14)]. It was commonly believed that this was "a subterranean place lower than Hades where the wicked dead were punished" (Fuhrman, 330). Despite other widespread speculations as to its meaning, it may be best to safely regard it "as the place of detention until the judgment" (Vincent, 691). It carries no positive notions or notations whatsoever. Plus, this regard would fit neatly with the next word: *teroumenous* ("being reserved") which is the same word used in 1 Pt. 1:4 regarding "the inheritance being reserved in heaven for God's people." The reservation for both the inheritance for God's people and the judgment for fallen angels is securely in place.

V. 5: *kai archaiou kosmou ouk epheisato alla ogdoon Noe dikaiosunes keruka ephulaxen kataklusmon kosmo asebon epaxas* ("and did not spare the ancient world but preserved Noah, the eighth preacher of righteousness, when the flood was brought

upon the world of the ungodly”)

Reference, of course, is to the flood (Gen. 6-9).

According to Genesis 4, Noah was the eighth from Adam, so, he may very well have been “the eighth preacher of righteousness” in the eighth generation. After all, in Genesis 7:1, God said to him, “for among all the people of the earth, I consider you alone to be righteous.”

However, as Green points out, the word “eight” is an idiom or an expression which cannot be understood in the usual sense of the word. If this is the case here, then the word means “he was rescued with seven others” (99).

But whatever the exact meaning may be, this is another demonstration that “judgment [to many] and mercy [to few] are balanced against one another in the same manner” (Bigg, 276).

The word *kataklysmos* (“flood”) is used in the NT only in reference to the flood from which Noah and his family were rescued (Mt. 24:38, 39; Lk. 17:27; here).

The word *asebon* (“ungodly”) indicates people with lack of piety; wicked, sinful. It denotes people who are “destitute of reverential awe towards God” (Thayer, 79). It “describes great sinners of all ages up to the end as transgressors, ungodly, and sinners” (Foerster, 196). [This word occurs elsewhere in the NT in Ro. 4:5; 5:6; 1 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pt. 4:18; 2 Pt. 3:7; Jude 4, 15 (twice)].

V. 6: *kai poleis sodomon kai gomorras tephrosas katastrophe katekrinen hupodeigma mellonton asebesin tetheikos* (“and condemned with a catastrophe by having reduced to ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, having made them an example to those who are about to live ungodly lives”)

The word *tephrosas* (“having reduced to ashes”) occurs only here in the NT. It means “to cover with or reduce to ashes” (Arndt and Gingrich, 821), or “being overwhelmed with ashes” (Moulton and Milligan, 632). By so destroying them, God “sentenced them never to be rebuilt” (Bigg, 277).

The word *tetheikos* (“having made”) is a perfect tense participle indicating that “once being set as an example, the judgment remains so” (Lenski, 313). “It was an imperishable memorial of God and of the Divine judgment” (Bengel, 770).

The word *mellonton* (“about to, intend to”) is a present tense participle denoting active planning and purposeful pursuits. To plan and pursue such a destructive course of action will only lead to similar disastrous consequences.

Indeed, God has set forth in this writing, by way of reminder, for all to see and read, the wretched end of wickedness. It is a warning that ungodliness always leads to destruction; these three demonstrations or examples should not be ignored or taken lightly.

C. Deliverance (2:7-8)

Only one instance of righteous deliverance is here pinpointed, in contrast to the three instances which demonstrate the doom of unrighteousness or wickedness.

V. 7: *kai dikaion Lot kataponoumenon hupo tes ton atthesmon en aselgeia anastrophes errusato* (“and having rescued righteous Lot being troubled by the sensual lifestyle of morally corrupt lawlessness”)

The word *errusato* (“having rescued, delivered”) is a relatively rare word in the NT – cp. to *sozo*, more than 100 times – for deliverance or salvation from some form of evil. And in this deliverance, “evil is overcome by the acknowledgment of God’s majesty” (Kasch, 1003). Here, it is an act of mercy in the midst of the madness which Lot was experiencing.

The Genesis picture of Lot is a mixed one of aesthetic appreciation (13:10-12), hospitality (19:1), weakness (19:6), a semi-morally depraved drunk (19:8, 33-35), and one who resented the widespread homosexuality of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. This latter trait is apparently what caused Peter to classify him as *dikaion* (“righteous”). The word signifies one who stands out “from the world with

its wicked works” (Schrenk, 189), especially “those who sinned against nature” (Bengel, 770).

This perspective advanced by Schrenk is legitimized by Peter himself: “being troubled by the sensual lifestyle of morally corrupt lawlessness.”

The word *kataponoumenon* (“being troubled”) is a present tense participle denoting an ongoing sense of agony over the situation. [It occurs in the NT only here and Acts 7:24.] It carries the idea of being “worn down, sore distressed” (Vincent, 693).

The following verse amplifies the thrust of this verse. It is a common feature, especially in the OT, of parallelism (likeness, similarity; correspondance; agreement but in slightly different words or expressions).

V. 8: *blemmati gar kai akoe ho dikaios egkatoikon en autois hemeran ex hemeras psuchen dikaian anomois ergois ebasanizen* (“for by what the righteous one saw and heard day after day while living among them - i.e., [their] lawless deeds - he kept torturing [his] righteous soul”)

The word *ebasanizen* (“kept torturing”) occurs elsewhere in the NT in Mt. 8:6 (“grievously tormented”), 29 (“torment”); 14:24 (“tossed”); Mk. 5:7 (“torment”); 6:48 (“toiling”); Lk. 8:28 (“torment”); Rev. 9:5; 11:10; 12:2; 14:10; 20:10 (“tormented”). So, the idea is that of “constant annoyance of insult and ill-usage” (Bigg, 278).

[However, Genesis 13:11-13 record the fact that Lot knew how sinful or wicked the cities were when he choose to live there. So, in a rather straightforward way, Lot himself was responsible for the inner turmoil he was experiencing.]

Nevertheless, the sights and sounds were temptations which he himself resisted. He “emerged victorious from the ordeal, and therefore God delivered him” (Bigg, 277), even if, as Moo suggests, “almost against his will” (105). Green shares this outlook with Moo: “His heart was so deeply embedded in Sodom that he had to be positively dragged out (xix. 16). Time and again it is emphasized that his rescue was entirely due to the unmerited favour of God, which He shows to men because of what He is, not because of what they are (e.g. xix, 16,

19)” (101).

The ones to whom Peter was writing were also tempted and the mention of Lot’s scenario was designed to strengthen them in their own particular situation.

D. Deductions (2:9)

In light of the three demonstrated truths just presented about God’s judgement, as well as the one cited case about deliverance from judgment, there are a few deductions or conclusions to be drawn without hesitation.

V. 9: *oiden kurios eusebeis ek peirasmou hruesthai, adikous de eis hemeran kriseos kolazomenous terein* (“the Lord is able to deliver godly ones from a period or process of testing/trial, and to keep punishing unrighteous ones to the day of judgment”)

The word *oida* with the infinitive means to “be able” (Arndt & Gingrich, 558). So, God is not only “able” but actually *does* provide deliverance for His godly ones; not only Lot and Noah, but others who trust and obey Him.

The word *peirasmou* (“a period or process of testing/trial”) refers to trial or testing of one’s faith or “all those challenges to faith that Christians experience in this world” (Moo, 106).

The word *kolazomenous* is a present tense, passive voice, which means they are “presently being punished.” In other words,

the wicked who depart this life enter immediately into a state of punishment, but the final state of that punishment awaits the end and God’s ultimate reckoning with man as to what he had done with the total trusteeship of life. Peter states that this is especially true of those who in this life are guilty of the sin of **defiling passion** and who **despise** authorities. (Summer, 182).

Peter now continues to expand and explain what those **defiling**

passions, and the persons in whom they reside, are specifically like. In the remaining verses of this chapter, he will provide **23** details about them:

E. Details (2:10-22)

V. 10: *malista de tous opiso sarkos en epithumia miasmou poreuomenous kai kuriotetos kataphronountas* (“and especially those who are pursuing life after the corrupt desires of the flesh even while despising constituted authorities”)

(1) – *sarkos en epithumia miasmou* (“corrupt desires of the flesh”) The word *miasmous* occurs only here in the NT and refers to “defilement, corruption, pollutions” or “the vices of the ungodly which contaminate a person in his intercourse with the world” (Vine, 288). Lenski says “in lust for defilement. Men ought to shrink from defilement; these men lust after it, crave all its filth” (316). Green says this “suggests sodomy . . . ‘in their foul lust’ or ‘in their longing for the sordid’” (103). Moo, in concert with Green, calls it a reference to “homosexuality” (107). Hauck states “the reference is to the licentious affirmation of sexual impulses by the libertines” (647).

(2) – *kataphronountes kuriotetos* (“despising constituted authorities”)

The word *kuriotes* occurs only 3 other times in the NT: Eph. 1:21 & Col. 1:16; Jude 8.

There are several possible options for the meaning of this expression: (a) angelic beings, such as Paul mentions in Eph. 1:21 & Col. 1:16; (b) the lordship of Christ (*kurios* – “Lord”); (c) church leadership. Bigg (279) prefers (b). Strachan suggests (b) while also adding: “a despising of the Lordship of Christ, which was the central theme of the apostolic teaching and preaching” (137). Lenski also supports (b) saying that this fits the idea in 2:1: “even denying the Master Who bought them.” He adds, “Vile flesh is their leader, lordship that is lordship indeed they utterly despise, repudiate entirely” (317). Foerster is emphatic: it “denotes here the divine majesty and therefore God Himself, whom the false teachers wilfully despise with

their liberinism” (1097).

V. 10: *Tolmetai authadeis, doxas ou tremousin blasphemountes* (“Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble while speaking against glories”)

(3) – *Tolmetai* (“Daring”)

Although the verb form of this word occurs 16 times in the NT [Mt. 22:46; Mk. 12:34; 15:43; Lk. 20:40; Jn. 21:12; Acts 5:13; 7:32; Ro. 5:7; 15:18; 1 Co. 6:1; 2 Co. 10:2, 12; 11:21 (twice); Phil. 1:14; Jude 9], the adverb *tolmeroterou* occurs only in Ro. 15:15; and the noun *tolmetai* occurs only here in the NT. It means “shameless and irreverent daring . . . not dreading or shunning through fear” (Vine, 269). The KJV translates it, “presumptuous” or “excessive in daring” (Fuhrman, 331). It refers to those who “do not hesitate to defy man or God” (Summers, 183).

(4) – *authadeis* (“self-willed”)

This word occurs twice in the NT: Tit. 1:7 and here. It means “self-pleasing, arrogant” (Robertson, 165). In both of these occurrences of the word, “the reference is to human impulse violating obedience to the divine command. In both cases it is religious leaders who are exposed to this danger or succumb to it . . . heretics who are afraid of nothing, i.e., bold and shameless fellows” (Bauernfeind, 509).

Barclay says the word is “used of a man who had no idea of anything other than pleasing himself. In it there is always the element of obstinacy” (329-330). While it appears illogical, irrational, and even somewhat insane, Barclay still maintains that “if a man is *authades*, no logic, nor common sense, nor appeal, nor sense of decency will keep him from doing what he wants to do. . . stubbornly and arrogantly and even brutally determined on his own way” (330).

Trenchard reinforces the warped mindset of such a person who while “obstinately maintaining his own opinion, or asserting his own rights, is reckless of the rights, feelings and interests of others (349).

(5) – *doxas ou tremousin blasphemountes* (“not trembling while

speaking against glories”)

The word *tremousin* occurs in the NT four times: Mk. 5:33; Lk. 8:47; Acts. 9:6; and here. With the negative *ou* it means “no trembling, no fear, not afraid.”

Mayor suggests that Peter is checking “the spirit of irreverence towards the representatives of authority and dignity, and especially towards the Supreme Authority and the high dignities of that unseen world which is altogether hidden from the materialists against whom he writes” (74). These bold and shameless fellows are making light of the divine and are bent to “belittle it, detract from its dignity . . . to foster a sense of the unreality both of sin and of goodness, and to reduce the motives of conduct to a vulgar hedonism” (Strachan, 137).

The word *doxas* (“glories”) refers to “angelic powers” (Kittel, 251), both bad (v. 4) and good (v. 11). So, with a materialistic, earthly-oriented viewpoint of life, these false teachers deny that the spiritual world even exists. It is not surprising, therefore, that they “speak against” angelic powers of celestial, heavenly beings, obviously both bad and good – since neither actually exists to them. So, by making fun of and/or belittling and blaspheming “angelic powers,” the bad angels, evil, sin, and hell are irrelevant, as are the good angels, righteousness, God, forgiveness, and heaven. This world of sensuality, greed, ungodliness, and lawlessness is all that matters. Their philosophy was a resurrected form of Judges 21:25: “the people did what was right in their own eyes.”

V. 11: *hopou aggeloi ischui kai dunamei meizones ontas ou pherousin kat’ auton para kuriou blasphemon krisin* (“whereas angels who are greater in strength and power do not bring blasphemous accusations against them before the Lord”)

(6) - In stark contrast to these false teachers, even the stronger and far more powerful angels do not bring blasphemous judgments against these false teachers before the Lord, even though the angels are “unseen agents of God’s will” (Summers, 183). It is not the **job** of the angels, so to speak, to speak against these false teachers, much less for the false teachers to speak blasphemously against angelic, celestial

beings.

So, Peter is powerfully pointing out that “these men were more free with their language than the angels themselves, and it would be no bad thing if Christians remember that any condemnation of others are necessarily uttered ‘before the Lord’. Consciousness of His presence tames the tongue” (Green, 107).

V. 12: *houtoi de hos aloga zoa gegennemena phusika eis halosin kai phthoran en hois agnoousin blaspemountes, en te phthora auton kai phtharesontai* (“and these as illogical animals, having been born for capturing and perishing in which they are ignorant while blaspheming, and they shall be subject to decay in their mortality”)

The word *hos* obviously, brings a comparative perspective into the frame: they are like

(7) – *aloga zoa* (“illogical animals”)

Animals are inferior in many ways, especially in that they know “nothing above nature, nothing spiritual” (Bengel, 772). The word *aloga* (“without reason, logic”) occurs only here in the NT. It means “without reason, basis, meaning, calculation, dumb . . . the irrationality of the beast” (Kittel, 141). By adding *zoa* (“living animals, creatures”) to *aloga*, the primary stress is that “their chief characteristic is that they are ‘alive,’ and have no sense of the moral issues of life. Like animals, they exist” (Strachan, 138). Thus, as Biggs puts it: “they have physical, but not intellectual life; they are no better than brutes that perish” (Biggs, 280-281).

(8) - *gegennemena phusika* (“born creatures of instinct”)

“Instinct is here distinguished from the rational centres of thought and judgment” (Strachan, 138). The word *phusika* (“mere natural animals”) occurs only here in the NT and indicates they are unspiritual, locked totally in the sphere of naturally irrational impulses, urges, and the inevitable loss of life.

The two words *halosin kai phthoran* (“for capture and killing”) lend concrete insights as to the nature of their being: *halosin* occurs only

here in the NT. It denotes the “catching of animals for food; born to be caught and killed” (Arndt and Gingrich, 41). Indeed, the word *phthoran*, which means “decay, depravity, that which is perishable, ruin,” completes the idea under consideration. These false teachers do not possess “angelic restraint” [v. 11] . . . they have neglected their rationality and followed their passions. Very well, their end will be like an animal’s, too (Green, 107).

These false teachers taught that nature itself provided redemption for them, which is why they stressed the need to just **go with the flow** of life’s normal urges, impulses, and instincts: “indulging the flesh, despising authority, daring, self-willed, fearlessness, blasphemous talk” (vs.10). They claimed this knowledge to be the one and only true knowledge about life’s nature and purpose.

However, their “claim of redemption from nature is countered by the threat of destruction in a merely natural and irrational knowledge, comparable to that of the beasts, which is set in antithesis to the claim to have knowledge” (Koster, 275-276).

(9) – *en hois agnoousein blasphemountes* (“in which they are ignorant while blaspheming”)

The word *agnoousin* (“ignorance”) presents “a picture of loud ignoramus posing as professional experts” (Robertson, 166) who “howl at things **of which they are ignorant**” (Summers, 183).

Indeed and most specifically, “their brutishness is evidenced in the fact that they **speak evil (blaspheme) of the things they understand not** (matters of which they are ignorant). They pose as spiritual experts when in reality they are ignorant of the things of God” (Fuhrman, 331).

(10) - *en te phthora auton* (“in their own corruption”)

“These false teachers are captivated by and actually prisoners of their own corrupt hearts [which] will bring about their destruction” (Mayor, 131)

(11) - *phtharesontai* (“they shall be destroyed”)

As Moule so readily points out: “*they shall perish – which is the proper recompense for their wickedness, wicked that they are*” (36).

“Like unreasoning animals, destined only to be slaughtered, the false teachers, in their unreasoning arrogance and sinfulness, are destined also for the slaughter – the slaughter of God’s judgment” (Moo, 124).

Barclay puts the matter in his own unique style:

To make pleasure the be-all and the end-all of life is a suicidal policy and in the end even the pleasure is lost. The point Peter is making is this, and it is eternally valid – if a man dedicates himself to these fleshly pleasures, in the end he so ruins himself in bodily health and in spiritual and mental character, that he cannot enjoy even them. The glutton destroys his appetite in the end, the drunkard in his health, the sensualist his body, the self-indulgent his character and peace of mind. (331)

Verses 13-22 contain an extensive use of participles which provide a parallel summary way of describing additional attitudes and behaviors which justify the judgment/destruction/condemnation of these false teachers mentioned in v. 12.

V. 13a: *adikoumenoi misthon adikias* (“suffering wrong as retributive punishment for doing wrong”)

The participle *adikoumenoi* is a present tense, passive voice verb and is the first parallel summary way of describing their destruction (v. 12). That is, their destruction is seen in the fact that they receive retributive punishment back from or as a result of doing wrong. As Green puts it, “immorality is not worth while. In the end it will rob you” (109), by not delivering the positive results which the false teachers advocated. Such wrongdoing will pay you off, for sure, but it will

only be “ultimate destruction” (Moo, 125).

The word *misthon* is used by Peter only twice in this writing [cp. v.15] and refers to “reward or wages of iniquity” (Vincent, 697) or “the recompense given (mostly by God) for the moral quality of an action” (Arndt and Gingrich, 525). Ronald Knox translates it, “the reward their wickedness deserves.”

(12) – *hedonen hegoumenoi ten en hemera truphen* (“regarding sensual indulgence in the daylight a pleasure”)

The word *truphen* occurs in the NT only here and Lk. 7:25. It means “sensual indulgence or luxury and generally denotes wantonness [reckless, heartless, malicious, without reason or excuse; not moral, lewd; not restrained, revelling]” (Bigg, 282). It “signifies to lead a voluptuous life, to give oneself up to pleasure or luxuriousness ” (Vine, 290, 981), especially in regard to sexual pleasures.

The expression *en hemera* (“in daylight”) tends to represent that “revelling and drunkenness in the daytime were naturally thought worse than similar excess by night . . . used of banquets which began and ended in daylight, not in the night” (Bigg, 282). In other words, no attempts were made to shield that activities by night; no sense of shame occurred, even in broad daylight. Rather, it was *hedonen* or mutually acceptable “pleasure, enjoyment, agreeable taste” (Arndt and Gingrich, 344-345) of their evil practices.

(13) – *spiloi kai momoi* (“stains and blemishes”)

The word *spiloi* occurs only one other time in the NT (Eph. 5:27) and refers to a moral spot (Vine, 1090) or “a disfiguring spot” (Robertson, 167) or “filthspots” (Lenski, 323).

The word *momoi* occurs only here in the NT and means “blame, reproach, disgrace – a denunciatory term” (Mayor, 134; Strachan, 138) or “scabs” (Lenski, 323).

(14) – *entruphontes en tais apatais auton suneuochoumenoi humin* (“delighting in their deceitful ways, while eating together with you”)

The word *entrophontes* occurs only here in the NT and means “to take delight in” (Moulton and Milligan, 219), “to live in luxury, to live delicately” (Thayer, 219).

The sphere of such living is indicated by the word *apatais* (“deceitful ways”). [It occurs in the NT in Mt. 13:22; Mk. 4:19; Eph. 4:22; Col. 2:8; 2 Th. 2:10; Heb. 3:13.] This may be “the watered-down meaning of ‘pleasures’” (v. 12).

This sphere is also indicated by the participle expression “eating together with you.” The word *suneuchomoumenoi* may refer to “the agapae or love-feasts because these were transformed by base men into seductive revels” (Thayer, 55). The present tense participle (“while eating together with you”) denotes that the false teachers were still associating with the church meetings rather than having separated from them. [Was this one of the same type problems which existed in the church at Corinth?]

So, these false teachers doubtlessly “rationalized it [their perverted practices at the love-feasts] as sacred prostitution, enacting in the cultic meal the unity between Christ and His Church – but lust, naked lust, was their driving force. And lust often delights to deck itself out in religious garb” (Green, 110).

(15) - v. 14: *ophthalmous echontes mestous moichalidos kai akatapaustous hamartias* (“having eyes full of an adulteress, unceasing from sin”)

Sight is “the instrument of evil no less than good” (Vincent, 699). The vision of these false teachers is geared toward adultery. This is “a striking expression to describe the man who sees an adultress in every woman, or in plainer words, who cannot see a woman without lascivious thoughts arising in his heart” (Mayor, 135). As both present tense participles indicate, they cannot cease from such sinning.

In fact, the expression *akatapaustous hamartias* (“unceasing from sin”) means “*unfed, that cannot be satisfied with*” (Moule, 41). Enough is never enough.

deleazontes psuchas asteriktous (“enticing unstable people”) is an

amplification of the adulteress eyes just mentioned. The matter of unable to cease from adultery sinning spills over into contact with unstable people; more specifically “luring women to commit adultery and to join these lewd fellows in adultery” (Lenski, 324).

The word *deleantes*, another present tense participle means “to catch by bait as in verse 18 and James 1:14 [the only other occurrences of this word in the NT].

The objects of this enticement are *asteriktous psuchas* (“unstable people”). The word *asteriktous* occurs only here in the NT and refers to “weak, insincere” people; that is, those with the same type character as themselves. Evil attracts evil.

As a continuing characterization of these false teachers in connection with the eyes of an adulteress, *kardian gegumnasmenen pleonexias echontes, kataras tekna* (“a heart having been trained in covetousness, accursed children”).

The word *gegumnasmenen* is a perfect tense, passive voice participle which indicates they are presently in a state of some kind. In this instance, that state is indicated by the word *pleonexias* (“one who is grasping or greedy, one who is covetous”). The object of their grasping or greediness is sexual encounters. Their heart, from which desires and actions follow, is “fully trained and is ever training for covetousness” (Lenski, 324). Their hearts have been “trained in unbridled ambition for the things they have no right to have” (Barclay, 332).

Notice also the two-fold use of the word *echontes* (“having”) in this verse. It means that adultery and covetousness are the same. That is, the pathway for their covetousness is the evil desires of adultery.

The expression *kataras tekna* means that the curse of God rests upon them. They are “under God’s curse now, and are heirs of doom in the world to come” (Fuhrman, 332).

(16) -V. 15: *kataleipontes eutheian hodon eplanethesan* (“they went astray by abandoning/forsaking the true way”)

The word *aplanethesan* (“they went astray”) is an aorist tense verb indicating a concrete action. It means “to stray away, or go astray; to be mistaken, deceived or misled” or “to wander, to be seduced” (Vine, 282-283).

They went the wrong way *kataleipontes eutheian hodon* (“by abandoning/forsaking the true way”

This present tense participle indicates simultaneous action relative to the main verb *splanethesan* (“they went astray”).

The *eutheian hodon* (“true way”) is the straight way mentioned in Mt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3; Lk. 3:4-5; Acts 8:21; 9:11; 13:10. But the false teachers chose the way that leads to corruption and destruction.

It is further described as *exakolouthesantes te hodo tou Balaam tou Bosor* (“having followed the way of Balaam, of Beor”).

Balaam was a non-Israelite prophet whose role was to do and teach the ways of God. Instead he was hired by the heathen king, Balak, to curse Israel and turn them away from God. God, however, caused him to bless Israel.

This concrete example of taking the wrong road is from the OT (Numbers 22-24). His actions made him the typical type of false prophet/teacher. He too was covetous, like the false teachers in 2 Peter.

His specific sin was *hos misthon adikias hegapesen* (“he loved he wages of unrighteousness”). See v. 13.

It is true, as v. 16 points out, his contemplated actions were so dumb that he received a rebuke from a dumb animal:

V. 16: *elegxin de eschen idias paranomias hupo zugion aphonon en anthropou phone phthegxamenon ekolusen ten tou prophetou paraphronian* (“but he received a rebuke for his own transgression from a dumb donkey, who having spoken with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet”)

So, he whose role was to rebuke the people for their transgressions was himself rebuked by his donkey for his own transgressions.

The word *aphonon* (“dumb, silent”) “applies only to creatures which

are entirely mute” (Mayor, 137).

This word *elegxin* (“rebuke”) occurs only here in the NT, but is kin to the word *elegchos* of “reproof” in 2 Tim. 3:16 and “evidence, verification, certainty” in Heb. 11:1. [The verb form of this word, *elegcho* occurs in Mt. 18:15; Lk. 3:19; Jn. 3:20; 8:9, 46 16:8; 1 Co. 14:24; Eph. 5:11, 13; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 4:2; Tit. 1:9, 13; 2:15; Heb. 12:5; Ja. 2:9; Rev. 3:19.]

The word *paranomias* (“transgression, disobedience”) is found only here in the NT. It refers to “the promise to curse Israel for reward, or a warning conviction prior to that act of the purpose to curse Israel” (Gutbrod, 1090).

His contemplated cursing was *paraphronian* (“madness, insanity”), a word which occurs only here in the NT. It denotes “being beside one’s wits” (Robertson, 168). So, Peter links the madness of the prophet Balaam with the madness of the false teachers who “like illogical animals, having been born for capturing and perishing, engage in ignorant blaspheming” (v. 12). It is interesting that a dumb donkey was used by God, whereas the false teachers who are here compared to “illogical animals” are even dumber than a donkey. At least, Balaam was *ekolusen* (“restrained”) from his double-dealings for gain but these false teachers knew nothing about restraints.

(17) – V. 17: *Houtoi eisin pegai anudroi* (“These are wells without water”)

The word *pegai* denotes “spring, fountain” and indicates what under normal circumstances would provide relief from heat. A well, spring or fountain without water is empty, void, and useless. Such is the nature of these false teachers.

(18) – *homichlai hupo lailapos elaunomenai* (“mists being driven by a storm”)

The word *homichlai* (“mists”) occurs only here in the NT and refers to fog which “baffles the sight. The mist is not borne by the gentle breath of the Spirit, but driven by the fierce gusts of ignorance and

self-will” (Bigg, 284).

The word *lailapos* (“storm, squall, whirlwind”) occurs also in Mk. 4:37 and Lk. 8:23). Rather than being those who provide spiritual moisture and the benefits of a shade, they only contribute to the hustle and bustle of disturbance like whirlwinds and storms.

(19) – *hois ho zophos tou skotous teteretai* (“for whom the blackness of darkness has been/is reserved”)

The word *zophos* (“blackness”) appears for the second time in this writing (cp. 2:4). It denotes “the chilling horror attending darkness” (Bengel, 774). It depicts “gloom” (Bengel, 674). Trench adds these perspectives: “the twilight gloom which broods over the regions of the setting sun, a strong contrast to life and light . . . that sunless world itself” (373). Lenski suggests “the outer darkness of Matt. 22:13. This is the fate that awaits them” (328).

The word *teteretai* (“has been/is reserved”) is a perfect tense, passive voice which indicates a completed state of being/reality. This is the same verb that is used in 2:4 as a present tense, passive voice participle (“being reserved”). So, though viewed from two different standpoints, they both reflect the same truth: their “reservation” is written in ink which cannot be erased or eased.

(20) - V. 18: *huperogka gar mataiotetos phtheggomenoi deleazousin en epithumiais sarkos* (“For by speaking boastful words of worthlessness, they entice by sensual fleshly desires those just escaping those living in deception/delusion”)

One of the sayings by parents to children who are/were the victims of verbal bullying is to tell them: *sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me*. Although offered with good intentions, this advice is filled with meaninglessness. Words are capable of lifting our spirits to high degrees, and also rendering major lifelong injuries from which healing may be difficult, if not impossible, to experience.

From that negative consequential angle, these false teachers thrived on the use of *words* as the favorite weapon in their arsenal of attacks.

Their words are here described as *huperogka* which is composed of two other words: *huper* (“above, beyond”) and *ogkos* (“swelling” – Seesemann suggests the idea of “weight, burden, mass” [p. 41]). Their words are also described as *mataiotetos* (“worthlessness, futility, vanity”). The word occurs here and in Jude 16. It means, as already noted above, “of excessive bulk . . . a kind of speech full of high-sounding verbosity without substance” (Vincent, 702). [This word also occurs in Rom. 8:20; Eph. 4:17.]

So, their excessive composition of worthless words spring from hearts which are equally worthless and devoid of love for God and others.

Rather, love for gain – not God - is what prompts them to entice others with words which are geared toward fulfilling sensual fleshly desires. After all, the spiritual world does not exist; all that matters is the world of words that capture matter (that is, corrupt desires, despising authority, daring, self-willed, blaspheming heavenly beings, pseudo-knowledge, wrong doing, deception, adultery, greed, unrighteousness, etc.).

The victims of their weaponry of words are new or recent converts. This is indicated by the phrase, “those just escaping those who are living in deception.” In other words, the new converts are just escaping from their former pagan relationships. Since they are still “babes in Christ,” still somewhat immature, weak, and only the beginnings of deeper, fuller knowledge about God, His Word, and the social ramifications of the Christian faith, they are prime targets of attack.

V. 19: *eleutherian autois epaggellomenoi* (“promising them freedom/liberty”)

Here, their words are filled with promises of freedom or license to do what their desires dictate for them to do. It refers to the “freedom to go wherever one likes, is used of freedom from restraint and obligation in general; righteousness laid no sort of bond upon them; they had no relation to it” (Vine, 470). So, there is “freedom from fear of evil spiritual beings, from eschatological judgment, and any external moral constraint” (Moo, 143-144). And as Green

points out, “freedom from the rules of love imposed by their new Master” (117).

Yet, the promises came from those who were anything but *free*.

autoi douloi huparchontes tes phthoras (“while they themselves are slaves of corruption”)

Their promising words of freedom were actually filled with emptiness because they came from those who were “slaves” and not free at all. Their slavery was in connection with *phthoras* (“corruption”), previously used in 1:4 and 2:12 (twice). [The word also occurs in Ro. 8:21; 1 Co. 15: 42, 50; Gal. 6:8; and Col. 2:22.] It “signifies a bringing or being brought into an inferior or worse condition, a destruction or corruption” (Vine, 245). It refers to “that gradual decay of spiritual and moral sense that follows on wilful self-indulgence” (Mayor).

The added phrase *ho gar tis hettonetai, touto dedoulotai* (“for by what someone has been/is overcome, by this he is enslaved”)

The word *hettontai* (“has been/is overcome”) is a perfect tense participle denoting a present state of enslavement to that by which he was overcome or worsted. Cp. v. 20 and 2 Cor. 12:13.

This rather common proverb “originated from the practice of enslaving enemies captured in wartime” (Moo, 144). So, the empty words of these false teachers generated a “vaunted liberty turned into license which generated a new bondage” (Green, 117-118). The quest for freedom from morality and moral restraints actually culminated in a different kind of slavery: the prison-house of oneself; a form of slavery which is permanent or from which there is no escape (perfect tense, passive voice participle)! After all, everywhere you go, there you are!

(21): V. 20 – *ei gar apophugontes ta miasmata tou kosmou en epignosei tou kuriou[hemon] kai soterous 'Iesou Christou, toutois de palin emplakentes hettontai, gegonen autois ta eschata cheirona ton proton* (“For if after having escaped the corruption of the world by the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and are overcome, having been mixed up in these again, the last state is worse for them than the first”)

The particle *ei* indicates this is a first class conditional clause which assumes reality, so, with the idea of “since they had escaped . . .”

The word *apophugontes* (“having escaped”) occurs only in 1 Peter: 1:4; 2:18. So, as indicated in the notes on 1:4, it refers to the new birth or conversion to Christianity and those who are now “parkers of the divine nature” (1:4). So, these present false teachers were, at least, past or former followers.

ta miasmata tou koumou (“the defilement, corruption of the world”) describes the morally bankrupt nature of the world apart from God. This is the only occurrence of the word *miasmata* in the NT. The aspect of the world which is here specified by this word “is to the licentious affirmation of sexual impulses by the libertines” (Hauck, 647).

The “escape” does not, however, mean an end to the tugs of temptation with regard to defiling, corrupting influences (“the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life” [1 Jn. 2:16]). While these influences no longer dominate the life of a Christian, their appeal may still linger and have potential negative effects. After all, some form of relapse is clearly possible, as noted in this passage.

In fact, Peter uses the word *hettetai* again (v. 19 – perfect tense, passive voice), this time in the present tense, to indicate that a person may, indeed, be “overcome, worsted” repeatedly.

The word *emplakentes* (“having been mixed up, entangled”) is an aorist tense, passive voice participle to depict what precedes and leads to being overcome. [The word occurs in the NT here and 2 Tim. 2:4.] This word was used in common speech “of sheep whose wool is caught in thorns” (Arndt and Gingrich, 256). Green points out its use as a fishing imagery in connection with the idea of “enticement” like luring bait on a hook [cp. vs. 14, 18: *deleazo*; also James 1:14]. So, if a Christian is again lured, enticed, caught up in the defiling, corrupting influences of the world, he is thereby presently “overcome.”

These false teachers set net traps or lures to catch people and wound up being caught or trapped in their own nets. The idea is that those

(false teachers and adherents to their teachings) who once accepted Christ and then abandoned Him for the defilements/corruptions of the worldly society [which functions apart from God] will be worse than before embracing Him.

Peter may well be reflecting on the words of Jesus in Mt. 12:43-45. It seems apparent that those who consciously, purposefully, and openly turn from the truth to which they once turned will experience a judgment of immeasurable proportion, as the next verse declares.

(22) - V. 21 – *kreitton gar en autois me epegnokenai ten hodon tes dikaiosunes e epignousin hupostrepsai ek tes paradotheises autois hagas entoles* (“for it was better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than having known to turn away from the holy commandment having been delivered to them”)

The Christian faith has a beginning point and also embraces continuing discipleship in that faith along the lines of growth in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (3:18). But may one’s growth be arrested or stilled? The beginning point of the Christian faith is regeneration/new birth. But continuing discipleship is sanctification/new behaviors. While the regeneration part of the Christian faith cannot be lost or become null and void, the sanctification part may be a different story. [See my commentary on Hebrews for detailed analysis of this biblical truth.]

Peter understood this truth well. In fact, he said it is better to never have even entered the sanctification pathways of the Christian faith [here called “the way of righteousness] than to enter and then subsequently exit. The *hagas entoles* (“holy commandment”) is in the singular which seems “to summarize the totality of Christian instruction” (Moo, 146). Barclay’s comments deserve attention:

If a man has never known the right way, he cannot be condemned for not following it. But, if he has known it and then deliberately taken the other way, he sins against the light; and it were better for him that he had never known the truth, for his knowledge of the truth

has become his condemnation. A man should never forget the responsibility which knowledge brings. (335)

“If we walk in the light that is given, more light will be given. But if we refuse to walk in the light that is given, that very light becomes darkness” (Harper Shannon).

(23) - V. 22 – *sumbebeken autois to tes alethous paroimias, Kuon epistrepsas epi to idion exerama, kai, Hus lousamene eis kulismon borborou* (“It has happened to them [like] the true proverb, **A dog returns to its own vomit**, and, **A sow after having been washed to rolling in mud**

The poison of these false teachers (and their adherents) is well-documented by a popular proverb (*paroimias* – singular; although there are two proverbs quoted, the singular emphasizes that both of them are making the same point.

In order to vividly highlight the nature of the false teachers, Peter uses two animal analogies, both of which were especially repugnant to Jews: the “dog” depicting *sickness* and the “hog” depicting *filthiness*. Either of these alone would be sufficient for the readers to form repulsive, disgusting, detestable, and nauseating reactions. But to combine them should certainly send overwhelmingly adverse reactions and responses to them.

The dog, for example, by eating its own *exerama* (“vomit” – here only in the NT), portrays the former followers of Christ, now become false teachers, returning to their former lifestyle of sickness and rejecting its cure.

The pig, by returning to *kulismon* (“wallowing” – here only in the NT) in *borborou* (“mire” – here only in the NT) after washing, portrays the former followers of Christ, now become false teachers, as rebels against the continuation of discipleship, and the muddy loss of their sanctification.

Bigg’s point seems worthy of noting: “The sense is, not that the creature has washed itself clean in water (so apparently the R.V.), still less that it has been washed clean (as A.V.), and then returns to the

mud; but that having once bathed in filth it never ceases to delight in it” (287).

Well, whatever additional or other meanings may be attached to these brief comments and portrayals at hand, this appears to be a loud ringing adoption, adaptation, or endorsement of the united portrait of dogs and pigs as “pictures of mankind out of touch with God” (Green, 122).

THE BEAUTIFUL

IV PROMISE OF DAY OF THE LORD (3:1-18)

A. Discernment (3:1-2)

V. 1: *Taute ede, agapetoi, deuteran humin grapho epistolen en hais diegeiro humon en hupomnesei ten eilikrine dianoian* (“This now, beloved, [is] the second epistle I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your morally pure mind by a reminder”)

The word *agapetoi* (“beloved ones” – here in the plural) occurs first of all in 1:17 in the singular (*agapatos*) in reference to the Son of God. As a most affectionate term of endearment indicating one who is the object of God’s love, it now applies to those who are the sons of God (appearing again in vs. 8, 14, 17; in the singular about Paul in v. 15).

As the “second epistle,” at some point following 1 Peter, it is written for encouragement against the enemies and is aimed at their mind or thinking patterns. It is not written to provide initial information about the truths of God but to remind them of truths which they already knew and about which reenforcement was deemed necessary via a reminder.

The purpose of writing is clear: the word *diegeiro* (“I am stirring up”) was first used in 1:13 in regard to a reminder also. He compliments them on the ease with which they should be stirred up mentally and morally. The word *eilikrine* (“morally pure”) indicates

being honest or sincere, “unmixed, pure in a moral sense” (Arndt and Gingrich, 221). Thayer adds that the *dianoian* (“mind, understanding”) is “pure when unfolded and examined by the sun’s light; from the conjecture of others” (175). This appropriate mindset is, of course, denoting “freedom from falsehoods” (Trench, 322) which the false teachers were setting forth.

The word *hupomnsei* (“reminder, remembrance”) first appeared in 1:13; the verbal variation of this word *hupomimneskein* (“to keep on reminding”) occurs in 1:12. So, quite obviously, the importance of reminding or recalling things into the present from the past is no small issue. It is like revisiting the site of the anchor which solidifies their basis of operation and provides assurance in the midst of any storms.

V. 2: *mnesthenai ton proeiremenon hrematon hupo ton hagian propheton kai tes ton apostolon humon entoles tou kuriou kai soteris* (“to remind of the words having been previously spoken by the holy prophets and your apostles about the commandment of the Lord and Savior”)

Both OT prophets and NT apostles gave explicit warnings about false teachers and Peter is appropriately reminding them of this fact. The *entoles* (“commandment”) here is the same word used in 2:21 in regard to “the way of righteousness” or moral conduct which reveals one to be a follower of God’s way of life. This demand of divine-like conduct was not only taught by the OT prophets and NT apostles but also by Jesus (cp. Mt. 5:48 and many other places). This, his readers knew, but stood in need of a reminder in light of the opposition they were facing from the false teachers. So, don’t forget to remember to forget what the false teachers are saying and direct your mental attention and moral actions on what you already know to be correct. Discernment is drastically needed, especially in light of the denial by the deluded ones of the divine truth about the promise of the day of the Lord .

B. Denial (3:3-4)

V. 3: *touto proton giniskontes hoti eleusontai ep’ eschaton*

ton hemeron [en] empaigmone empaiktai kata tas idias epithumias auton poreuomenoi (“knowing this first, that in the last days mockers will come with mocking, conducting their lives according to their own desires”)

The phrase *touto proton ginuskontes* (“knowing this first”) is a repetition of the same phrase in 1:20. Here it refers to the fact that the appearance of these false prophets/teachers (2:1) should not create surprise or catch his readers off guard. Again, they have always dotted the historical scenes with their deceptions and delusions, just as the OT prophets, Jesus and the NT apostles so readily declared. So, the fact that they are active “in the last days” (the time between the first and second coming of Jesus) is only to be expected.

The deceptions and delusions of these “mockers” will now collectively be termed “mockings” or “scoffings” at the central teachings of the Christian faith. As seen in ch. 2, many of their wicked ways are delineated quite clearly, and are here convincingly captured under the phrase “conducting their lives according to their own desires” rather than God’s Word. A detailed look at ch. 2 is a perfect picture of those desires in action. “Mockers do not so much reason against the truth of God as they disdain and belittle it” (Moo, 166).

Now, one final aspect of their mocking is identified in v. 4: the denial of the promise concerning the day of the Lord.

V. 4: *kai legontes, Pou estin he epaggelia tes parousias autou? aph’ es gar hoi pateres ekoimethesan, panta houtos diamenei ap’ ardhes ktiseos* (“and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue in the same way from the beginning of creation”)

Here, this final component of their “mocking” is a scathing protest against the reliability of OT prophets, Jesus Himself (Mt. 24:5 and elsewhere), and the apostles about the promise (i.e., fulfillment of the promise) of His coming in victory and vengeance. After all, to disdain and belittle the OT prophets (“fathers” and patriarchs) is to disdain and belittle the very foundation of the Christian faith. With as

many slurs and innuendos as may possibly proceed from the mouth of man, the false teachers attacked the various people of God by pointing out that all things have continued as they always have – and always will.

This last or final component of their ‘mockery’ is simply coming full circle to that which began in 2:1: “even denying the Lord Who bought them.” It is an A to Z scenario. To deny the first truth (the purchase price) transitions rather easily to the denial of the last truth (the price-less parousia).

C. Destruction (3:5-7)

V. 5: *lanthanei gar autous touto thelontas hoti ouranoi hesan ekpalai kai ge ex hudatos kai di’ hudatos sunestosa to tou theou logo* (“for it wilfully escapes their notice that the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and with water by the word of God”)

The word *lanthanei* (“escapes notice”) is translated “ignorant” by the KJV and refers to intentional ignorance by the false teachers. [The word is found elsewhere in the NT in Mk. 7:24; Lk. 8:47; Acts 26:26; and Heb. 13:2.] It will be used in v. 8 in relation to encouraging Peter’s readers to not copy or mimic them.

Forgetting which is unintentional can be frustrating, embarrassing, and even harmful if that which we forget leads to regrettable consequences. Forgetting which is intentional, however, may lead to consequences which are fatal. The latter was the case with the false teachers. They wilfully or deliberately and purposely chose to forget former facts they once embraced. Why? Because those facts collided with the newly-found speculative myths by which they celebrated the natural world of moral corruption and covetuous desires. And in order to make some degree of sense to their sensual speculations, they went so far as to contradict the very origin of creation itself. In other words, chop off the head and the tail will quite wagging! So, to deny the biblical truths of creation makes it much easier to deny any other facets of biblical truths.

The point is simple: the earth was created out of water and is sustained by water according to the dictates of the Creator Himself.

The expression *di' hudatos* (“with water”) is an idiom which means “that there are waters above and below the earth” (Moule, 55). Or as Bigg puts it, “water is at once the material and the instrumental cause of the subsistence of the earth. It is made out of the sea below, and its life depends on the rain from above” (293). God said it and that settles it. Any other teaching which denies or contradicts this primal or chief affirmation of God’s word should be placed in the garbage bin of speculation – and useless at that.

V. 6: *di' hon ho tote kosmos hudati kataklustheis apoieto* (“through which the then-existing world, having been flooded with water, was destroyed”)

An additional fact is that the ancient world was destroyed by the same element of water. Through the use of natural means, the earth was not annihilated but was *kataklustheis* (“overflowed” – only here in the NT) “by the direct touch of the hand of God” (Williams, 106). So, while “the false teachers had ignored the agency of the Divine word” (Strachan, 143), Peter stands boldly in declaring that that very word was instrumental in collapsing the heretofore orderliness of “the continuity of nature” (Green, 131) in the world of mankind. The word *apoieto* means that “human life perished” (Green, 131).

V. 7: *hoi de nun ouranoi kai he ge to auto logo tethesaurismenoi eisin puri teroumenoi eis hemeran kriseos kai apoleias ton asebon anthropon* (“and the present heavens and the earth by His word are being reserved for fire while being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men”)

The word *nun* (“present”) draws a stark contrast to the ancient world. The present heavens and earth are *tethesaurismenoi* (“being reserved” – perfect tense denoting a present state or condition) for the judgment also but this time with fire instead of water. Indeed, “the earth is ‘stored with fire,’ which will one day burst forth and con-

sume everything” (Bigg, 295).

The present tense of *teroumenoi* (“while being kept or guarded”) indicates that which is currently in motion. This word first appears in 2:4, 9,17 in describing the false teachers and here occurs for the last time in this epistle. It indicates such guarding that prevents one from escape from the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. Yes, the word *apoleis* (“destruction”) “refers to the cessation of existence in this world and to the final and terrible separation from God involved in condemnation. The false teachers who sneer at any idea of judgment to come, will themselves experience its full fury” (Moo, 172). Peter previously used this word in 2:1 (twice), 2, 3. It so sadly denotes “not a simple extinction of existence, but an everlasting state of torment and death” (Oepke, 397).

D. Delay (3:8-10)

V. 8: *Hen de touto me lanthaneto humas, agapetoi, hoti mia hemera para kurio hos chilia ete kai chilia ete hos hemera mia* (“and do not let it escape your notice, beloved ones, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day”)

The verb *lanthaneto* (“escape notice”) occurs here for the second time in this chapter (v. 5) and refers to avoiding what the false teachers were doing. While the false teachers intentionally ignored certain truths about God, Peter is commanding the Christians not to follow them.

The affectionate term *agapetoi* (“beloved ones”) in the plural occurred first in 3:1 and will be used again in verses 14 and 17. It refers to those who are the objects of God’s love and Peter’s also. The particular point Peter now places before them is the issue of *time*. The world is so constructed that *time* affects every aspect of living: births, deaths, schedules, deadlines, and other facets of life. God, however, is not affected by and does not operate along the same time parameters by which people function.

The false teachers, however, circulated part of their mockery around this very issue (v. 4). So, as part of Peter’s rebuttal of them, he declares that any sense of delay on God’s part cannot be measured by a tick-tock clock. He functions according to

concepts of reality which surpass the minds of mankind. To Him, there is no difference between a day and a thousand years. God's clock is not set by any standard timepiece or in Eastern, Central, Mountain, or Pacific time zones. So, "the scoffers scoff ignornantly" (Robertson, 175).

V. 9: *ou bradunei kurios tes epaggelias, hos tines braduteta hegountai, alla makrothumei eis humas, me boulomenos tinas apolesthai alla pantas eis metanoian choresai* ("for the Lord is not slow about His promise, as some regard slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing anyone to perish but all to come to repentance")

So, delay does not mean denial, as the false teachers proclaimed. The word *bradunei* ("slow") suggests "dilatoriness, slackness, indifference or inability" on God's part (Williams, 108). Peter here takes his stand and loudly proclaims that God is neither of these. "God is not impotent nor unwilling to execute his promise" (Robertson, 175).

Rather, what looks like a negative to the false teachers is actually a positive from God. To put it simply: "The lesson from this verse is twofold: encouragement to Christians – for the delay does not spring from dilatoriness; and to all men – for it gives opportunity for repentance" (Williams, 108).

V. 10: *Hxei de hemera kuriou hos kleptes, en he hoi ouranoi hroizedon pareleusontai stoicheia de kausoumena luthesetai kai ge kai ta en aute ergo heurethesetai* ("and the day of the Lord will come as a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a loud noise and the elements being burned up will be destroyed and the earth and its works will be made manifest [before God]")

Although Peter is here referring to the second coming of Christ, he uses an Old Testament term or expression ("the day of the Lord") to describe it. [This expression is also in Acts 2:20 {from Joel 3:4}; 1 Thess. 5:2/4; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Thess. 2:2] Again, this phrase is found frequently in the OT. There are four

main characteristics or features of it: (1) it denotes darkness rather than light; (2) it denotes judgment; (3) it denotes a day of supernatural intervention in the affairs of human history; (4) it denotes certainty. In other words, it refers to some point at which the sovereignty of God would be active in a most evident way.

That this day will come as a thief echoes other passages: 1 Thess. 5:2, 4; Rev. 3:3; 16:15.

In regard to this coming day, the popularly used English word “soon” may be a bit misleading. After all, “whenever it comes, soon or late, the day of the Lord will be sudden and unexpected, like the attack of a thief. There will be no time for repentance then” (Bigg, 296).

The word *hroizedon* (“loud noise”) – occurring only here in the NT - is apparently used to describe the roaring fierce flames from the fire’s destructive force. Or, in the words of Mayor: “the whizzing sound produced by rapid motion through the air, as the flight of a bird or an arrow, and is then used for the rushing movement itself or the accompanying crash or noise . . . the noise caused by a devouring flame” (157).

The *stoicheia* (“elements”) are the physical elements of air, water, fire, earth, sun, moon, stars.

kausoumena luthesetai (“being burned up will be destroyed”) “denotes a violent consuming heat” (Strachan, 145). The word *kausoumena* occurs only twice in the NT: vs. 10, 12. The word *luthesetai* occurs three times in 1 Peter: vs. 10, 11, 12. Green quotes Bo Reicke:

The solar system and the great galaxies, even time-space relationships, will be abolished . . . All elements which make up the physical world will be abolished by heat and utterly melt away. It is a picture which in an astonishing degree corresponds to what might actually happen according to modern theories of the physical universe. (138-139)

As shocking, startling, scintillating, and sensational as these various images may be, their primary purpose is to jolt his readers into a realization of the need for faithfulness in the pursuit of moral excellence. The fact that they live in the midst of a morally corrupt society signals the need for diligence (as noted in 1:5, 10, 15; 3:14) and resistance to the throes of evil which tend to pull one down into the region of compromise and/or even cancellation of their commitment to Christ and the Christian cause. Therefore, more practical ethical exhortations in this regard follow:

E. Diverse Exhortations (3:11-18a)

V. 11: *touton houtos panton luomenon potapous dei huparchein [humas] en hagiais anastrophais kai eusebeiais* (“with all these things being destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be in holy behaviors and godlinesses”)

In light of all these documented details *luomenon* (“being in the process of utter destruction” [Present tense, passive voice]), the realization that “the world and all therein is essentially transitory” (Vincent, 706), should (*dei* – indicating ethical necessity or obligation) motivate one *huparchein* (“to be”) [cp. 1:8] a transformed person who lives *en hagiais anastrophais kai eusebeiais* (both of these words are in the plural, so, “in the sphere of all sorts of holy behaviors and kinds of godlinesses.”

So, there is a clearcut connection between the coming of Christ and the call for consecration to Him and the Christian calling. After all, if there is nothing to the various components of the Christian faith, including the return of Jesus Christ, then life is basically a road to nowhere with meaninglessness written all over it. The daggers of these false teachers were aimed at their own kind of destruction: the Christian faith. Indeed, “it was impossible to give up the hope of the advent without ethical deterioration” (Barclay, 345), on top of the other false teachings with which they sought to divert and dissuade Peter’s readers from the pathways of holy behaviors and various kinds of godlinesses.

V. 12: *prosdokontas kai speudontas ten parousian tes tou theou*

hemeras di' hen ouranoi puroumenoi luthesontai kai stoicheia kausoumena teketai (“looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God by means of which the heavens being on fire will be destroyed and the elements, being heated, shall be melted”)

So, rather than looking around at the various attractions of the world and the numerous kinds of bait and lurements which the false teachers dangled before them, turn your gaze and desires in one specified direction: “the day of God” and its utter and complete destruction of what, at present, seems so desirable. Both verses 10 and 12 shed light on v. 7.

13: *kainous de ouranous kai ten kainen kata to epaggelma autou prosdokomen, en hois dikaiosune katoikei* (“but I [we?] am expecting new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness lives/dwells/inhabits”)

On the other hand, the new heavens and earth will be nothing short of complete “righteousness,” devoid or “to the exclusion forever of all unrighteousness” (Williams, 110). So, whatever else the future habitation may involve, the future home of complete righteousness **then** serves as a reminder to make it “easier to endure the vexations of unrighteousness **now**” (Fuhrman, 336). The second coming and the new home of righteousness provide incentives for moral conduct in the here and now. After all, “the parousia is both judgment on the wicked and triumph for the kingdom” (Strachan, 146).

V. 14: *Dio, agapetoi, tauta prosdokontes spoudasate aspiloi kai amomtoi auto heurethenai en eirene* (“Therefore, beloved ones, since you are looking for these things, you must be diligent to be found by Him spotless and blameless in peace”)

The word *Dio* (“Therefore, For this reason”) is an inferential conjunction based on what has been said before and which gives direction to what follows (i.e., present and future actions should stem from the truths just presented).

The affectionate word *agapetoi* (“beloved ones”) flows once again

from Peter's heart to their hearts as a mark of assurance and motive for actions commensurate with holy behaviors and all kinds of godlinesses mentioned in v. 11.

No struggle in this regard is even contemplated because Peter uses a present tense participle to acknowledge that they were already looking for and expecting the new heavens and earth, on top of and consistent with holy behaviors and godlinesses.

His present command to be "diligent" (*spoudasate*), however, returns him to the former command to "apply diligence" in 1:5 [in regard to development] and to be "diligent" in 1:10 – in regard to making firm/reliable their calling and election so as to prevent stumbling].

As Maclaren clarifies, there are three essential conditions which make God's kind of life possible: "a bright hope which should fill our future; a sovereign purpose or aim which this hope should impress upon us, and a diligent earnestness with which that aim or purpose should be pursued" (225-233). The collective nature of these conditions cannot be separated or divorced the one from the others.

The verb *heurethenai* ("to be found") indicates the scrutiny of examination and evaluation by Jesus the Judge on the day of the Lord/His second coming.

The desirable finding, of course, is a spin-off of what was said in a negative way in 2:13 about the false teachers: i.e., they were *spiloi kai momoi* ("spots and blemishes"). The desire for his readers is that they be found *aspiloi kai amometoi* ("without spots and blemishes"). Plus, the *eirene* ("peace") mentioned here is the same *eirene* ("peace") for which multiplication was wished in 1:2. *aspiloi* means "without moral and spiritual defilement" (Fuhrman, 337); no "external spot" (Trench, 380); and *amometoi* means "in sincerity, without blemish or defect" (Ibid.); "the absence of internal blemish" (Trench, 380). *eirene* means "a sense of balance and proportion, however difficult his present circumstances" (Green, 143). Or as Strachan puts it, "peace and righteousness are one" (146).

V. 15: *kai ten tou kuriou hemon makrothumian soterian hegeisthe, kathos kai ho agapetos hemon adelphos Paulos kata ten dotheisan auto sophian egrapsen humon* (“and consider the patience of our Lord as salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you”)

Although we do not know the particular communication from Paul to them, Peter states that such did take place. Whether it was a lengthy or short form of communication, Peter sums up the significance of it in the words: consider or regard this patience of the Lord [about which he noted in v.9] for the sake of salvation to others or to secure their own salvation with confidence. Either or both ideas may be represented here.

To call Paul *ho agapetos hemon adelphos* (“our beloved brother”) is Peter’s way of affirming the bonds between himself and Paul, instead of any antagonism between them – as some may have tried to claim. It is also Peter’s way of stressing that he and Paul taught the same thing with regard to holy behaviors and various kinds of godliness, as well as the day of judgment. The “wisdom given to him” came from God Who gave Paul correct insight about the gospel or good news of the second coming.

V. 16: *hos kai en pasais epistolais lalon en autais peri touton, en hais estin dusnoeta tina, ha hoi amatheis kai asteriktoi streblousin hos kai tas loipas graphas pros ten idian auton apoleian* (“as also in all epistles speaking in them of these things, in which it is difficult to understand some things, which the ignorant and unsteady ones distort, as the rest of the scripture, to their own destruction”)

Peter’s acknowledgment of other writings by Paul which addressed the issue of moral or ethical conduct and the return of Jesus is a mark of comradeship. The theme of consistency and cooperation without consultation provides evidence of the work of the Spirit of God with both of them, and others involved as human instruments in the reception and writing of scripture.

Peter's additional acknowledgment that Paul wrote some things which are "difficult" but not "impossible" to comprehend could be said about other biblical writers – including Peter himself (1 Pt. 3:18-22). Also, Peter did not say that "all" of Paul's writings were difficult but only "some." The word *dusnoeta* ("difficult, hard") occurs only here in the NT. Behm maintains "there can be no knowing whether the reference is to Paul's judgments on Christian freedom, on the *pneumatikos anthropos*, on flesh and spirit, or to his eschatological statements" (963). Perhaps, mere acceptance of that statement is most appropriate here.

The fact that *hoi amatheis kai asteriktoi streblousin* ("the ignorant and unsteady ones distort") fits well into the efforts of the false teachers.

The word *amatheis* ("ignorant") occurs only here in the NT. Strachan suggests it means "a mind untrained and undisciplined in habits of thought, lacking in the moral qualities of a balanced judgment" (147).

The word *asteriktoi* ("unsteady") occurs here and 2:14 in the NT and is "related more to conduct, those whose habits are not fully trained and established" (Ibid.). Harder says it "means 'unstable' with reference to not keeping to sound doctrine. False teachers beguile unstable souls, 2:14, and those who are unstable in doctrine confuse the understanding of difficult passages in Paul's letters, 3:16" (657).

The word *streblousin* ("distort") occurs only here in the NT. It means "to twist or dislocate . . . as applied to the perversion of scripture" (Vincent, 708). This twisting of scripture was done "that they might serve to justify moral laxity" (Bigg, 301). So, by sound "teaching the Christian is established in the way of truth (ii. 2), and of justice (ii. 21), the straight way (ii. 15), the way of which is substantially one and the same in the Old Testament and in the New" (Ibid).

The efforts of these false teachers extended not only to Paul's letters but also *tas loipas graphas* ("the rest of scripture"). In other

words, there is no end to these desperados's domain to distort or twist scripture, so they must cover all scripture "because all inspired writing speaks the same thing with the same wisdom" (Lenski, 355).

Of course, they do so *pros ten idian auton apoleian* ("to their own destruction"). The word *apoleian* was previously used in 2:1(twice), 2, 3; 3:7. It does not suggest a serious condition for which remedial efforts are highly likely to lead to a complete recovery and/or cure. Rather, it "signifies to destroy utterly; the idea is not extinction but ruin, loss, not of being, but of well-being" (Vine, 304). This is a terminal result from time-oriented teachings.

V. 17: *'Humeis oun, agapetoi, proginoskontes phulassesthe, hina me te ton atthesmon plane sunapachthentes ekpesete tou idiou sterigmou* (" You therefore, brethren, knowing this already, keep on staying alert, in order that not having been carried away by the deceit/deception/delusion of the morally corrupt ones you may not fall from your own stability/steadfastness")

In acknowledging that his *agapetoi* (beloved ones) already know the truths of which he is writing, he encourages them to "keep on staying alert or guarding themselves" (present tense, middle voice, imperative mood) against the false teachers and their tactics which only damage their targets.

The purpose (*hina*) behind this imperative exhortation is that by doing so they will "not have been carried away by the deceit of the morally corrupt ones." After all, "error has many attractive faces by which even the most experienced may be beguiled" (Green, 149).

The word *sunapachthentes* ("carried away") occurs here and only 2 other times in the NT: Ro. 12:16; Gal. 2:13. It means "to carry away together with" (Robertson, 180). That is, those who are now *sterigmou* ("stable, steadfast, firmly fixed") will thus avoid the efforts of the "unstable ones" (3:16) to carry them away from the truths of God and His Word.

V. 18a: *auxanete de en chariti kai gnosei tou kuriou hemon kai soterou 'Iesou Christou* ("so, keep on growing in the grace and

knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”)

The word *auxanete* (“keep on growing”) is a present tense verb in the imperative mood. In other words, this is not a suggestion but a command from the Commander through his human instrument Cephas! There is no room for standing still in the strategic warfare against Satanic forces of evil which seek constantly to draw and drag one away from growth and development. There is no graduation from such growth and development on this earth. Indeed, “the Christian life is a developing life, for it consists in getting to know at ever greater depth an inexhaustible Lord and Saviour” (Green, 150).

In 1 Pt. 4:10, Peter uses the word *poikilos* (“multi-flavored, many faceted”) to describe the grace of God. So, to keep on growing in grace and knowledge is a defense against heresy and apostasy. And in keeping with the word *poikilos*, “the more we know Christ, the more we will invoke His grace. And the more we know about Christ, the more varied will be the grace we invoke” (Green, 151).

So, this is another exhortation to stay the course and to accelerate the discipline and devotion required for the course. Indeed, rather than become destabilized by the deceit/deception/delusion of the distorted ones, maintain and exert your efforts toward additional growth and development within the appropriate confines and stable foundations of the Christian faith: “grace and knowledge.”

“Grace” is the unmerited favor of God mentioned in 1:2 and 3:18 where it is linked with “knowledge.” In other words, Peter **begins** this letter by saying there that he wishes “**grace** and peace to be multiplied to his readers in the **knowledge** of God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” That opening is now followed-up by his command at the **ending** of this letter toward the same concern: “keep on growing in the **grace** and **knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” So, with both simplicity and significance, Jesus Christ, as God Himself, is the source of both “grace and knowledge.” Apart from Him, as the false teachers maintained, there is neither “grace” nor true

“knowledge.” To keep growing in such spheres of “grace and knowledge” is the sure-fire way to avoid relapse and to give Him glory.

F. Doxology (3:18b)

V. 18b: *auto he doxa kai nun kai eis hemeran aionos. [amen]*
 (“to Whom the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”)

A doxology (from *doxa* [“glory” and *logos* [“word, saying, talk, message”]) is a word of affirmation regarding the glory of God. The word *doxa* (“glory”) refers to the manifestation of God’s presence and the greatness, radiance, and splendor of His very Being.

This is one of 3 other doxologies in the NT: Rom. 16:27; Phil. 4:20; and Jude 25.

A comparison of the phraseology in the doxologies is worthy of note :

Rom. 16:27 – *mono sopho theo, dia 'Iesou Christou, ho he doxa eis tous aionas amen* (“to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory forever Amen”)

Phil. 4:20 – *to de theo kai patri hemon he doxa eis tous aionas ton aionon amen* (“Now to our God and Father the glory forever forever Amen”)

Jude 25 – *mono theo soteri hemon dia 'Iesou Christou tou kuriou hemon doxa megalosune kratos kai exousia pro pantos tou aionos kai nun kai eis pantas tous aionas amen* (“to the only God our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord is glory, majesty, dominion and authority before all time and now and forever Amen”)

V. 18b: *auto he doxa kai nun kai eis hemeran aionos. [amen]*
 (“to Whom the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”)

As seen here, the other doxologies ascribe glory to “God.” So, since Peter has already equated God and Jesus in 1:1, he has certainly and clearly done just that in this doxology – without hesitation or equivocation.

Notice also that rather than being *through* Jesus (as in Rom. 16:27 and Jude 25), it is *to* Him (“to Whom” referring back to “Jesus Christ”).

Here also, Peter adds the word *hemeran* (“day”) in his doxology: *eis hemeran aionos* (“to the day of eternity” - occurs nowhere else in the NT) to coincide with “the day of the Lord” used in this letter. “*Eternity is a day, without night, unmixed and perpetual . . . duration as opposed to time*” (Bengel, 781).

So, “we glorify Christ, looking to this day and earnestly waiting for it” (Moo, 215). What a beautiful day that will be – for those who are ready!

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